



## Morton C. Cuplin

September 20, 1927 - September 7, 2012

Morton Cuplin, formerly of Bartlesville, passed peacefully in the presence of his loving family at age 84 on September 7, 2012 in Oklahoma City. Morton Cecil Cuplin was born September 20, 1927 in Holdenville, OK to Harrison and Otha (Sullivan) Cuplin. Morton married his high school sweetheart, Patricia Agee, on August 26, 1947. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education in 1951 from the University of Wichita and began his teaching career in Preston, KS. Morton served in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. While in the Army he organized men's choruses, TV performances, radio programs and church services. He was in the 97th Army Band and served as post bugler at Fort Sill. Following his service, Morton taught band, choir, and orchestra in Sedan (1954-1963) and Columbus, KS (1963-1966), before moving to Bartlesville, OK in 1966 to head the music department at Sooner High School from 1966-1982. He retired from his public school career as teacher at Bartlesville High School and music administrator for the Bartlesville Public Schools in 1986. He continued to give private music lessons following his retirement for as long as he was able. Throughout his career, individual and group music performances under his direction received numerous district and state honors.

Morton directed the Phillip's Men's Club Chorus, Philips 66 Singers, Bartlesville Little Theatre musicals, and Green Country Music Camp orchestra, concert and symphonic bands. For several years Morton directed

Neewollah musicals in Independence, KS. He was an interim conductor for the Bartlesville Symphony, guest conductor of the NE Oklahoma District Band, judged auditions for OMEA All-State orchestra, served on the North Central Evaluation committee and the OK State Superintendent's committee to draft competency exams for instrumental music teachers. Morton was a member of Phi Beta Mu National Honorary Bandmaster Fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia National Honorary Music Fraternity, Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity, Oklahoma Music Educator's Association, American School Band Directors Association, Northeastern Oklahoma Band Directors Association and the Music Educators National Conference. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge in Sedan, KS and the Bartlesville Lions Club. Morton was a devout Christian who gave his time and talent as choir director of Epiphany Episcopal Church in Sedan, KS and First Methodist Church in Columbus, KS. He was choir director for First Christian Church and choir member, lay minister and parish administrator for St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Bartlesville.

Mort Cuplin's greatest legacies are the family he loved and the multitudes of students he taught. He will be remembered for his wisdom and wit, spirit, passion and dedication to music appreciation and education.

Morton was preceded in death by his parents and six half sisters. Morton is survived by his wife of 65 years, Patricia, and two daughters: Pamela Dowd (Timothy) of Oklahoma City and Meg Gregory (Scott) of Eden Prairie, MN; grandchildren Kelley, Megan, Tim (Brittany) and Molly Dowd, Adam and Alex Gregory, sister-in-law, Joan McClatchey of Tulsa, along with niece Jan Pepper (Doug) and family of Tulsa, OK.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the caring staff of Crossroads Hospice, The Fountains at Canterbury and The Mansion at Waterford in Oklahoma City.

Funeral services will be held at 1 P.M. Friday, September 14 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Bartlesville, OK with Fr. Lee Stephens officiating. Following a reception, Interment will be at Memorial Park Cemetery under the direction of Stumpff Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Morton's name to St. Luke's Episcopal Church for ministry outreach or to the Bartlesville Education Foundation to support music education.

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# Previous Events

## Service

SEP **14.** 1:00 PM (CT)

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
210 E 9th St  
Bartlesville, OK 74003  
(918) 336-1212  
<http://episcopalbartlesville.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Morton C. Cuplin*

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ *Morton C. Cuplin*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *My condolences to the family. I just found this tribute to Mr. Cuplin, and want to belatedly add to it. Mr. Cuplin was my band teacher at Columbus H.S. I was an abused child, and he was instrumental in keeping me sane during my high school years. I played first chair french horn in the band. I babysat his children once. He was a wonderful teacher and mentor and very kind to me. I am now signed to a record label as a pianist in part because of his encouragement for my passion for music. Savana (Kathleen) Moore, class of '67.*

**Kathleen Moore** - January 06, 2020 at 01:36 PM



“ *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant..Enter into the joy of thy Lord."*

*(Matthew 25:23)*

**Mary Tracy Slusser** - October 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ *I went to Sedan High School and Mr. Cuplin was my mentor thru trying times in my life. I will always cherish my memories of Mr. Cuplin. What a Band we had when he was at Sedan!*

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**Judy (Sanborn) Parman** - September 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ Dear Cuplin Family,

*My sincere sympathy to you at the loss of your beloved husband and father. I recall when I was in grade school, going to my older brothers' football games and my favorite part was watching the Sooner High Band perform. The sound and marching techniques were outstanding. Even as a young child, I could see the excellence on the field. I was blessed with friends who influenced me into taking twirling lessons from Mrs. Gimlin starting when we were in grade school. I dreamed of someday being a twirler for Mr. Cuplin, and my dream came true. It was the hardest goal I ever had to work for and the greatest reward and experience. During the spring of my sophomore year, we started learning how to perform with rifles. We literally read from a book and looked at the pictures. In June, we went to a camp at Tulsa U. to gain more experience with an instructor. Mr. Cuplin was teaching at the camp as well. One day he stopped by to check on us during our class. We had black eyes, cuts and bruises on our faces, hands, arms, and legs from rifles that had jagged pieces and straps that weren't needed. Mr. Cuplin took one look at us, didn't say a word, and left for a few minutes. He returned, hopped out of his station wagon, and in the middle of our class, he went to work with pliers and tape on our 10 rifles -- tearing off sharp edges and taping down what couldn't be torn off. By the 1st football game, we were polished performers with brand new and more practical performance rifles. Everytime time I hear Hallulah Chorus, I think of marching in the Christmas parade through downtown. Every memory is wonderful and cherished. God Be With You Always! Shari (Rakes) Rathman Sooner High Class of 1979*

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**Shari Rakes Rathman** - September 25, 2012 at 12:00 AM

GS

“ Dear Pat and family, I was saddened to hear of Morton's passing last week. As a young boy, I always wanted to play drums, but because of Mort, I ended up taking violin lessons. Only wish I had continued, but could never have become as accomplished as he was.

Gaylen R. Sullivan - September 16, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ Pat...Carolyn forwarded Morton's obit. So sorry about your loss and sorry we didn't know until after the funeral. Prayers for you and family. Deanna Sullivan Mick

Deanna Mick - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Dear Pat and family,

So sorry to hear of Morton's passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We send our love and hope the wonderful memories he left behind will help comfort you. Love Carolyn and Ron

Carolyn Sullivan Breeden - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ My condolences to Pat,Pam and Meg along with their families. I have so many wonderful memories of band and stage band when I was at Sooner 1971-1974. "Uncle Mort" as we fondly called him was a great musician, teacher and friend. I will never forget him.

Dr. Jacqueline Smith - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

WB

“ Sorry to learn of your loss. We have many many great memories of our days together at Sooner High School.

*Wes, Joyce, Mark and Dana Burpo*

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**Wes Joyce Mark and Dana Burpo** - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ So sorry to hear of Morton's passing.i remember him being very kind to me when I was a little girl.

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**Linda Sullivan Breeden** - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ Just last week I was sharing with my colleagues the incredible memories I had being in the Sooner High School Band. I shared how my band director was an excellent teacher and coach of music! I will never forget the amazing days of band and Mr. Cuplin's influence on my life. Every week I use the skills he taught us in reading music with my worship choir at church. What a great man! I am so sorry for your loss! My prayers are with you!

*Sooner Class of '74*

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**Carla Jacobs Plunkett** - September 15, 2012 at 12:00 AM

PA

“ I'm sure Mr. Cuplin is in heaven, already telling the heavenly choir that yes, they can high high C if they just try. He's already taught the angels the proper placement of halos(two fingers up from the bridge of your nose) and the joy of fluffed wings. Now let the music begin-heaven needs you Mr. C-just like all of us did. Thank you for all you did, and all you where....

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**Patricia Camp Acord** - September 14, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ I am so grateful for Mort's discipline and father figure image for 3 of my daughters. He always gave good advice and inspired them all to do better and to aim higher.

*Love to all his family.*

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**Carolyn Stewart-Earley** - September 13, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ Mrs. Cuplin, Pam & Meg,

*We are so very sorry for your loss. It is a tremendous loss for all of Bartlesville as he had such an impact on the lives and musical education of countless students. I actually was not in band, but know the huge influence he was in my husband's life both as band director and mentor as Mort picked him up each week to sing in the First Christian choir! But I did have the joy of getting to play for the Sooner musicals under his direction. Such a kind, talented and witty family man! I know that he was welcomed home by the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." You're in our prayers.*

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**Julie Higginbotham** - September 13, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LA

“ Dear Mrs Cuplin, Pam and Meg,

*Please accept my deepest sympathy for the loss of your beloved husband and father. Thank you for sharing him with all of us who will remember him so fondly. He had the unique ability to make us feel like we were better than we thought we were. What a cherished gift he imparted to us all. Undoubtedly your family had to endure hours upon hours of scretching violin lessons--mine especially...I recall your dog was especially bothered during my 30 minute lessons. I also envision Mr. Cuplin with a hot cup of coffee in hand, and a warm smile on his face at my Saturday morning lesson...what a gentle, dear soul was Mort Cuplin. We are all dimished by his passing.*

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**Lori Johnson Ahlert** - September 13, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SY

“ Mr. Cuplin was not only a great band director (musically) but given who he worked with, he was one of the most patient teachers I had. He also had a great sense of humor and never lost his cool even when we screwed up royally. RIP Mr. C.

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**Steve YOUNG** - September 13, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ I am so very sorry for your loss. Mr. Cuplin was a wonderful teacher! He will be greatly missed.

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**Debbie Brown Alford** - September 13, 2012 at 12:00 AM

FM

“ We are so sorry for your loss.

*Our thoughts and prayers are with your family.*

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**Frances & Glyn McFarland** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ *Mr. Cuplin made a huge difference to me. He talked me out of graduating from Sooner a year early, and convinced me to stick around for my senior year. It was one of the best years in my life!*

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**Donna Mosher** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ *Dear Meg and Scott,*

*Your dad has such a profound impact on my life as a musician and imparted some very important lessons about life along the way - patience, persistence, teamwork, kindness, and commitment. May the lessons Mort taught and the spirit of the "Big Green Machine" live on in us and in countless generations to come.*

*May the love and support of those who loved your dad so profoundly surround you and comfort your family during this difficult time.*

*John Pruitt*

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**John Pruitt** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ *Mr. Cuplin inspired Robert (deceased), Doris and Gale Brown when he was a teacher in Sedan. Robert was still singing until this year. Doris became a music educator and Gale remembers spending study hall with Mr. Cuplin and learning how to repair instruments. He arranged music scholarships for Robert and Doris so that they could go to college. Thank you. You made a difference in our lives.*

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**Doris Brown Blanche** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BA

“ *Dear Pat: I have not seen you for many years but wanted to let you know we share your sorrow and will keep you in our prayers. It is wonderful that Mort influenced so many young lives.*

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**Bob Agee** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

AW

“ *Meg and family,*

*My condolences to you and your family at this difficult time. I have many fond memories of that time in my life and you and your sweet family are a part of those. Wish I could be there to offer my sentiments in person, but know that I am thinking about you .*

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**Ann Young Wilson** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

FW

“ *Dear Pam and Tim,*

*Sorry to hear about your loss. Some of my best memories of high school are from the marching band and Mr. Cuplin. He will rest in peace because of the many lives he touched while he was with us here on earth. Again, sorry for your loss.*

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**Frank Wall** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BW

“Mort taught us all so much more than music. He helped us grow up. He worked with coaches and encouraged many of us to use our talent in music and athletics. He was always interested, always a mentor - often ready to tell you not what you wanted to hear, but what you needed to hear. I will be humming the Spartans fight song the rest of the day!

*RIP Mort Cuplin.*

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**Bruce Wallace** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

PG

“Extending my deepest sympathies to Mr. Cuplin's family and friends. Notice I said MR. Cuplin LOL even yrs after HS yrs you never called him Mort.

*I had two favorite teachers while attending Sedan HS Mr. Bob Lawson and Mr. Cuplin. I can still hear him getting on to us when we'd be getting ready to march in a parade someplace... "GET THOSE HATS ON"*

*It had been many yrs since I last talked with him at another sad occasion at Grover Walker's memorial svc in Sedan. Jim Finley and I talked often about visiting him in Bartlestown but our schedule's never allowed us to. Jim took the news hard as I did. You will be missed not only by family but also by many students that you touched along the way. You were a heck of a band and chorus director. May you rest in peace knowing you touched so many lives in such a positive way.*

*Mr. Cuplin you were*

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**Phil Grove** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DZ

“ *RIP Uncle Mort, prayers to my cousins families. Will miss your visits.*

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**Dave Zellers** - September 12, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ *Mort was the best! High school would not have been any fun without the adventures of the band.*

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**Clair Thompson Bartley** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ *He was a great teacher. Will be missed. His love of music was great.*

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**Linda Sumner Schroer** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BB

“ *Mr. Cuplin was the very best teacher ever in Sedan and every thought of him is the way he inspired us to do our best and he believed each of us. He was a wonderful teacher and person. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.*

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**Blenda Lister Banks** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Thanks, Mort, for teaching with passion.

*Thanks, Mort, for sharing your love of music.*

*Thanks, Mort, for helping inspire a wonderful, 18-year career following in your footsteps.*

*Thanks, Mort, for always nudging me forward to explore new things in music. Like...keyboard percussion, euphonium, and jazz band.*

*Thanks, Mort, for penning the stirring music and lyrics to the Sooner High School fight song (I still have a copy in your handwriting).*

*Thanks, Mort, for working with the baseball coach so I could play ball AND play in the pit for the annual musical. Those experiences changed my life.*

*Many know Mort for things besides being a teacher, and from outside his tenure at Sooner High School. To those of us who went to Sooner we fondly remember "The Big Green Machine".*

*Thanks, Mort.*

**Jon Tanzey** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ *My favorite teacher ever! He was a mentor and a very kind man.*

**Camille Herrick** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ *To Pat, Pamela, and Meg*

*My memories are many*

*My sorrow is painful*

*My heart is grateful*

*for having know Mort.*

*It is difficult to lose*

*our family and friends*

*Jan (Walker)*

**Jannet ( Walker) Bly** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ *There are no words for my respect for Mort Cuplin. He was the most special teacher I ever had and the memories today are flooding my mind. "Keep Those Hats On, Band..... You're Not Dismissed" always makes me smile. What a wonderful teacher who loved all of us.*

**Jannie Holroyd Todd** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RC

“ *Former Band member from Sedan High School, class of 1961. He was such an awesome teacher and a great person.*

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**Rita Smith Carinder** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

KS

“ *Thank you, Mort Cuplin, for being such an inspiration, and gentle (but persistent!) influence on my life. Thank you for teaching me how to play the oboe, and especially how to achieve vibrato on that notorious instrument (the black stick of doom!). Thank you for encouraging me to sing, even though joining the choir would take me out of stage band. Hmmmm...:) Thank you for encouraging me to live my dream and pursue a performing career. Thank you for putting up with the constant interruptions on your private time from students who showed their devotion to you by TP-ing your house or by gathering on your lawn to play the 1812 overture on kazoos. Thank you for standing in the band room day in and day out, conducting us, teaching us. One man facing 200+ teenagers. Amazing. Job well done, life well done.*

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**Kathy Stewart** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ *Mort was a kind and gentle man and loved his music students to no end. I learned many things from him but mostly from the examples he set on how to live life in a Christian and polite way. I will miss him greatly.*

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**Steve Warring** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RK

“ *Angels in the Heavenly Choir are singing loud and proud, but I'll bet none are chewing gum. Mr. Cuplin, your positive influence has touched thousands of students during your career. I am lucky to have been one of them. You will be missed.*

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**Rusty King** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ *Mr. Cuplin was indeed an outstanding mentor. What an influence to each community in which he lived*

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**Lisa Korber** - September 11, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SA

“ *I remember him as my first instrumental teacher in Sedan*

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**Sally** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ *I've remembered Mort Cuplin all my life from the Sedan Episcopal Church choir to his teaching me flute to Nan and my sister, Ann, playing together. I have a photo of Nan and Ann if you want it. Will be grateful to him forever.*

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**Jana Garvin Cyrus** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

VJ

“ Sorry for your loss Mr. Cuplin was a great influence with my contiuing playing music. I play most everyday. My best memories were during marching season.

*Van D. Schmoll Jr.*

*Class of 79*

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**Van D. Schmoll Jr.** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Rest in Peace Mr. Cuplin, my class was the last class in 1963. praying for your family.

*Joan Terrell*

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**Joan (Jones) Terrell** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ I was saddened to hear of "Mr. Cuplin's" passing. I am 65 and still think of him by that name. He started me on a clarinet when I was in the 4th grade, and he was there until the end of my junior year in high school. He was a very kind and caring person, let alone a wonderful band director! We were so sad to see him leave Sedan, but I know everywhere he went, he touched so many lives. You have so much to be proud of in "Mr. Cuplin". Prayers for your family.

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**Sharon (Holroyd) McCully** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ *Mr. Cuplin was a fine, kind, gentleman and a wonderful, patient, teacher. I had him both as a private student and again as one of his last band students from 1983 to 1985. He opened my world to more than just rock music. He instilled a deeper love of music and band than I would have had without his teaching. God bless his memory.*

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**Marta Bentley** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CK

“ *What a wonderful person he was! He impressed me so much when I was just a sixth grader....he started me out on the flute! My parents always loved music, and Mr. Cuplin made it part of my life, too!*

*I know he will be greatly missed.*

*The Earth has lost a wonderful person, but just look at what Heaven has gained!!*

*Much love and many good memories, cack*

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**Carol Camp Kick** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ He was a beautiful soul who cared a lot for his students and saw his mission to help us be the best we could be and gave us much more than music.

*A lasting memory I have of Mr. Cuplin is after he moved from Sedan to Columbus. During a band trip, probably to a State Fair, Sedan's band finished the long parade march thru the streets. Many other bands were there too of course. Someone shouted, "there's Mr. Cuplin!" and we all broke rank and ran over to him, much to the surprise of the Columbus band. It was obvious that we all liked and respected him so much. Mr. Cuplin – a true leader and teacher who loved his work and students.*

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**Cecelia (Casement) Webb** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LD

“ I was so sad to hear the news. I had not seen Mr. Cuplin for many years but had thought about him often. He was one of my favorite teachers. He will be missed my many many former students, friends and family. Linda Spurlock Dunkin. Class of Sedan High School. 1962.

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**Linda Spurlock Dunkin** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LK

“ Best music teacher I had (class of 1962, Sedan). Wish he could have stayed in Sedan to teach my kids. I learned a lot and he made it fun.

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**Linda Aiken Kline** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ It certainly is not hard to express how much I admired Mr. Cuplin. He taught so much more than music. He taught self-respect, to respect others, integrity, to have an excellent work ethic, and to have self-confidence in your abilities. He expected and wanted the best from his students because he embraced the potential in each. Many, many people are so fortunate to have had him as a positive influence in their life. Rest in peace Mr. Cuplin but I'm glad that it's only happiness when I remember you.

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**Tricia Casement-Trapp** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CC

“ Mr. Cuplin was a wonderful teacher, not just of music, but of so much more. He taught us self respect and confidence and determination to do our very best. He was my music and band director in Sedan, KS, and made a big impact on my life, and the lives of many of my classmates. He will be missed by many. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

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**Cathy Casement-McDowell** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM



“ A sympathy card has been sent to the family of Morton C. Cuplin c/o Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory funeral home.

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September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RJ

“ We grieve today over the loss of our band leader; but will rejoice tomorrow in the knowledge that his spirit lives forever in everyone that he has touched. Rest in Peace Mort, it was an honor to have played under your tutelage.

*Ron Jones Sooner'77*

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**Ron Jones** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ *In the 60's, I was a former student of Mr. Cuplins. Because of Mr. Cuplin, I am actually able to follow music in church. Because he instilled music in me, I actually let my son play the drums ( which ,by the way, helped pay for college with scholarships). Thank you Mr Cuplin for not only influencing your students but future*

*generations. You will be missed, but*

*your positive influence will live on. Cindy Yorke Broxterman*

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**Cindy Yorke Broxterman** - September 10, 2012 at 12:00 AM