



## John D. Mohler

October 30, 1929 - February 6, 2019

John D. Mohler was born in Lancaster, PA in 1929, the son of John P. and M. Beatrice (Peiffer) Mohler. Throughout his life he maintained a strong appreciation for his Pennsylvania Dutch heritage, including the town of Lititz and its famous “Wilbur Buds”. In 1952 he married Dorothy M. Sheetz in Mount Joy, PA. She preceded him in death on March 17, 2010.

John began clarinet study with several very dedicated music educators. During his high school years he was a student of Salvadore Colangelo, Harrisburg, PA and he studied with Philadelphia Orchestra clarinetist Ralph McLane at the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, PA. In 1950 he joined the United States Marine Band and Orchestra, Washington, D.C., where he appeared frequently as a soloist. He then furthered his education at the University of Michigan School of Music with Dr. William D. Revelli and Professor William Stubbins, and was the University’s first recipient of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Instrument Performance.

Following two years on the faculty of Drake University, Des Moines, IA (1960-62), John returned to the University of Michigan in 1962 as clarinet instructor and clarinetist in the University Woodwind Quintet. From 1979 until his retirement in 1994, he served as Chair of the Wind and Percussion Instruments Department. John was elected by the School of Music faculty to three terms on the School of Music Executive Committee. From 1981 to 1984 he was an appointed representative to the University of Michigan Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics. In 1964 and 1975 Ann Arbor May Festivals, he performed eight concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra as a regular member of the clarinet section. John also appeared frequently as clarinet soloist and recitalist throughout the United States as well as at International Clarinet Society and ClariNetwork conferences. While president of the International Clarinet Society (1986-88) he was influential in the movement to merge the two organizations into the present International Clarinet Association. Other faculty appointments were to the Brevard Music Center, NC (1960), the Cumberland Forest Music Camp, KY (1965), and the Interlochen National Music Camp, MI (1986-87). At various times he performed as principal clarinetist of the Toledo and Plymouth Symphony

Orchestras and the Detroit and Toledo Concert Bands. Honors received include Phi Beta Kappa (1956), Harold Haugh Award for Excellence in Studio Teaching (1979), Honorary Member, Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (1985), School of Music Alumni Society Citation of Merit (1991), and The University of Michigan Band Alumni Lifetime Achievement Awards (1991 and 2012). He enjoyed many interactions with his students over the years.

John is survived by daughters Linda Mohler and Carol Mohler (Robert Sammler), son David Mohler (Elizabeth), granddaughter Abigail Mohler, step-grandsons Sean and Devon Smith, and his cherished partner Doris Pratt who has been a dear part of his life in later years.

The Mohler family will receive friends for visitation from 1:30 to 3:00 pm, Wednesday, February 13 with the funeral service to follow at 3:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 128 Park Street, Chelsea, MI, 48118. A private interment at Arborcrest Memorial Park will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the John Mohler Clarinet Scholarship Fund, The University of Michigan School of Music, 1100 Baits Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2085.

# Events

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**FEB** **Visitation** 01:30PM - 03:00PM

**13**

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First United Methodist Church  
128 Park St., Chelsea, MI, US, 48118

**FEB** **Funeral Service** 03:00PM

**13**

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First United Methodist Church  
128 Park St., Chelsea, MI, US, 48118

# Comments

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“ While I didn’t major in music at U of M, I started studying with Dr. Mohler my sophomore year (1984), after one of his college students, Don Lepage, passed me off to him at my high school band director, Lloyd Whitehead’s recommendation.

I was definitely in awe of him, after having heard him play his own clarinet transcription of Chopin’s “Fantasie Impromptu” with our local community college band. I had attended his studio class once with Don, so when we met for my first lesson, he remarked, “I remember you. I asked Don that day, “Who was that lovely blonde you brought to studio class with you?” It was one of those compliments that stick with a young teen girl- for life.

Over the next two years, Dr. Mohler, who insisted I call him “Mr. Mohler,” was a wonderful and generous teacher and mentor. So much of the teaching technique I use now with my students is his. I remember he’d give me free reeds, and charged my parents only \$10 per lesson.

When I started driving, there were times his wife had their only car, and he’d ask me to drive him home after our lesson, then not charge me at all. I remember he’d always give me driving advice.

One Summer, when he was guest soloist with the Toledo Concert Band at “Music Under the Stars,” we invited him over for dinner between the afternoon rehearsal and concert that Sunday evening. I was so thrilled, and more than a little nervous, that he was actually coming to dinner at our house!

One year, I brought him a homemade birthday German chocolate cake to my lesson. He was touched by that, and as a teacher myself now, I can understand what it meant to him. I was so embarrassed that cake didn’t turn out level, but I doubt he cared. He told me more than once how good it was.

The year I graduated, he took me out to dinner after our final lesson. He sent me a postcard from his travels up to the Soo Locks that Summer, right before I entered college.

He’d be tickled to know that I have a 13 year-old 8th grade daughter who is a talented oboist, and identical twin 12 yr old boys who trade 1st and 2nd chair back and forth in their sixth grade band.

Rest In Peace, Mr. Mohler, until we meet again. And know your legacy as a musician and as a man live on through me and mine.

My condolences to his family and friends. I’m glad you were blessed to have him in your lives for so long.

Jennifer (Wiederhold) Bailey - March 04 at 08:40 PM

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“ I studied clarinet privately with Dr. Mohler from 1965-70 while I was in junior high and high school in Ann Arbor.

He was not only a wonderful teacher but a mentor and role model for me as my father had passed away when I was 10.

Dr. Mohler was a very generous teacher. When it was time for me to get a high-quality instrument, he personally selected a high-end Buffet model for me from several sent to him by the factory, and got me his professional teacher discount. In addition, he introduced me to Frank Kasper, a Ann Arbor-based and renowned maker of mouthpieces, who made me one to suit my new instrument. On top of that, Dr. Mohler regularly provided me with his own handmade reeds, which were absolutely the best!

One last memory: in December, 1969, our high school (Ann Arbor Pioneer) symphonic band was invited to play a concert at the Midwest Clinic of the International Band & Orchestra Conference, held at the Sherman House in Chicago. Our band leader, Victor Bordo (also an excellent clarinet teacher), invited Dr. Mohler to play a solo piece with us at our concert - the Rondo from Von Weber's Concerto for Clarinet. It was a thrilling performance!

I am so glad to have known and studied with Dr. Mohler. My condolences to his family, friends and students.

Jon Cohen  
Santa Fe, NM  
nehocnoj@gmail.com

Jon Cohen - March 02 at 02:42 PM

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“ Dear Linda, Carol, and David,

I am so sorry that the threatened weather kept me from being there for the services today. Also, traveling alone is no longer so easy for me since my eyesight has deteriorated due to macular degeneration. Julia would have loved to bring me, but she did not have any flexibility at the university this week.

As you know John and I have been friends for many years. We first met in the fall of 1954 when we both enter the University of Michigan as freshmen. I was a very green young clarinetist from a small town in West Texas, and John has just come to Michigan after 4 years in the United States Marine Band and studying at the Curtis Institute for two years. Why he and Dorothy took pity on me I will never understand, but they did and really helped me, especially that first year.

We were all in awe of John – he could play anything! He quickly finished the BM and did a MM degree in woodwinds. Then he became the first student in the DMA in clarinet. It was a ridiculously rigorous academic program in those days, and it really did seem as if John just sailed through it.

When I returned to join the music faculty at U of M, John made me so welcome and I loved working with him. It was always such a delight for me to hear him play. I remember a really stunning trio concert that he played with Harry Sargous and Richard Beene. And it was a special thrill for me to play a really virtuoso clarinet duo

by Ponchielli with John. His blazing technique really kept me on my toes in that performance. When he retired, the wind department was never the same.

Julia's mother lived at the Pines in Chelsea, so we were frequent visitors and I had many pleasant lunches with John. He introduced me to the fine cuisine at the senior center – it was not exactly a gourmet feast, but the price was right!

If there is life after this time on earth, John will be one of the first people I will look for.

Fred Ormand and Julia Broxholm

**Fred Ormand** - February 13 at 09:22 AM

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“ Your Dow Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of John D. Mohler.



**Your Dow Family** - February 12 at 11:07 AM

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“ John was not only an extraordinary clarinetist and pedagogue; he was a lovely, gentle, and caring individual. I first met John when I was a student at the University of Michigan in the late 60s. While he was not my teacher, he was always available to me with advice, suggestions and encouragement. Later, when we were both involved with the International Clarinet Association, he was the calm voice of reason and was instrumental in engineering the rapprochement of the ICA and ClariNetwork. He will be remembered by his many accomplishments, the gratitude of his many students, but most of all, by his generosity and dedication.

Sincere condolences to the entire Mohler family

Gerry Errante

**Gerry Errante** - February 12 at 11:00 AM

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“ Love, Sean, Devon and Abigail purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of John D. Mohler.



Love, Sean, Devon and Abigail - February 11 at 04:10 PM

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“ Dr. Mohler was my clarinet professor and he was one of the most exceptional men I've had the privilege to know. His humor, kindness, amazing talent and patience made my lessons life long memories. I will always treasure the time we shared.

Sue Mayberry, 1970

Sue Nieuwma - February 11 at 03:41 PM

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of John D. Mohler.



February 10 at 08:49 PM

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“ We are so sorry not to be able to attend John's service on Wednesday. He was a profound influence in our lives and we are so thankful for his friendship. We will miss our visits and telephone calls that were filled with reminiscing, stories of his past and sound advice!

Our condolences to all the the Mohler family.

Steve and Patti Carlson

Stephen and Patti Carlson - February 10 at 07:49 PM

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“ In Sympathy, Steve and Patti Carlson purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of John D. Mohler.



In Sympathy, Steve and Patti Carlson - February 10 at 07:36 PM

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“ I'm very sorry to hear this news. Mr. Mohler always had a good sense of humor. He was a marvelous musician and a great supporter of the University of Michigan. I was lucky enough to go to the 1998 Rose Bowl game and parade with his family – I remember his pithy commentary on the music choices of the various bands – to the effect, that the bands should have played more Sousa pieces.

A wonderful man and I was lucky to have known him.

Julian Wan

julian wan - February 10 at 12:20 PM