



Leonard W. Cuddy

June 13, 1945 - October 18, 2021

Retired U.S. Navy Band drummer, percussionist, and musician extraordinaire, Leonard Cuddy, passed away October 18 after a long battle with pulmonary fibrosis. A native of Osawatomie, Kansas, Leonard was born in 1945 to Marvin and Velma (Alexander) Cuddy. His love of music developed quickly and, by age four, he had a drum set in the family dining room and a stack of jazz records nearby.

In 1967, Leonard earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Kansas and won an audition for a position in the premier U.S. Navy Band in Washington, DC. After boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois, he served as drummer in the Navy Band's first rock band, "The Port Authority" and later in "The Commanders" jazz trio. In 1974, the band established the Navy's premier jazz ensemble, "The Commodores", with Leonard at the drum set for the next 15 years—a position he considered the high point of his Navy career. Leonard capped his time in the service as the band's lead ceremonial drummer, guiding junior enlisted and rendering funeral honors at Arlington National Cemetery until his retirement in 1993.

Leonard was very active as a jazz drummer in the Washington DC area throughout his career, performing frequently at such venues as the legendary Blues Alley jazz club and backing up world renowned artists. He also performed as a drummer in Hank Levy's famous Towson State University Jazz

Ensemble in Baltimore. Leonard was awarded a Master of Music degree in 1971 from Catholic University of America and taught many students in the metro area.

Leonard Cuddy was a reverent and formidable student and expert of traditional Dixieland jazz and early Swing music and all its styles of drumming, and he incorporated the nuances and techniques of its legendary drummers into his own brand. An incredibly musical drummer, his mantra was always, "The drums should be felt more than heard", however, when driving a Big Band, he played with the ferocity of Dave Tough and Jo Jones, following in his Midwestern and Kansas City Swing drumming roots.

Visitation and rosary are scheduled for 10 a.m., October 25, with a funeral mass to follow at St. Louis Catholic Church, Alexandria, VA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the University of Kansas Endowment (www.kuendowment.org, memo line: in memory of Leonard Cuddy/percussion dept.) or St. Louis Catholic Church (building fund).

Previous Events

Viewing

OCT **25**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Louis Catholic Church
2907 Popkins Ln
Alexandria, VA 22306
(703) 765-4421

Mass of Christian Burial

OCT **25**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Louis Catholic Church
2907 Popkins Ln
Alexandria, VA 22306
(703) 765-4421

Tribute Wall



“ Leonard W. Cuddy

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



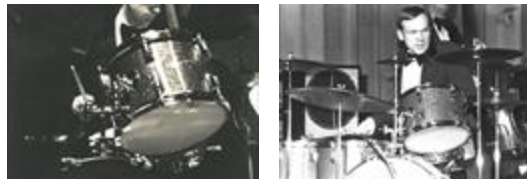
“ I was so sad and shocked at the passing of my friend and shipmate. Both of us drummers, we first met when the Naval Academy Band Dixieland group would come to the Navy Yard in DC to perform on the same concert venue as the Commodores. His love of Dixieland Jazz and mine of big band made us a great match for our friendship. Len, I will miss you showing up at concerts, our annual Christmas correspondence and of course knowing you are around and still swingin' . Save me a place on the band my friend. Rum-tum-ta-dum on your Ludwig drums. Rest well.. BZ
Jim Richards
MUCS USN, ret.



James Richards - October 23, 2021 at 04:15 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Jefferson Funeral Chapel - October 20, 2021 at 04:12 PM