



Max Eugene (“GENE”) Smith, Jr.

Max Eugene (“GENE”) Smith, Jr. of Plainfield, Indiana was born in Fort Wayne on September 10, 1936 to Max E. and Lucille Smith, Sr. He was a 1954 graduate of North Side High School where he participated in band, orchestra, and dance band. He was first chair clarinet in both band and orchestra and played lead alto sax in the dance band. He was the North Side Instrumentalist’s Outstanding Band Member in 1954. Upon graduation he received a scholarship to attend Indiana State. Gene graduated in 1958 with a B.S. in Education. While at Indiana State he participated in band, orchestra, choir, and various dance bands in and around Terre Haute. He performed with the Terre Haute Symphony on several occasions and once played with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. He was the 1958 co-recipient of the Harold Bright Outstanding Band Award. He was a member of the 451st Army Reserve Band from 1954 to 1962. He was first chair clarinet and drum major, retiring as sergeant first class. He received his M.S. Degree in 1963 with a major in Music Education.

Upon graduation from Indiana State Gene became assistant band director at Ben Davis High School in Indianapolis. He was head director of the Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Dance (Jazz) Band and assisted with the Marching Giant Marching Band. He once served on a committee for Dance Bands at IMEA. During his three year tenure at Ben Davis the band won first place at the Indiana State Fair Marching Band Contest and also at the Chicagoland Music Festival. The band participated in the Holland (Michigan) Tulip Festival where the jazz band was featured, marched in the Orange Bowl Parade, the Kentucky Derby Festival, and represented Indiana in John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Parade. In 1961 Gene became band director and Music Department Chairman at Fulton Junior High School, Indianapolis, where he continued to teach until his retirement in 1997. His Fulton bands received 40 First Division Ratings in his 36 years of teaching. His Symphonic Bands received 3 perfect scores six times and missed all perfect scores by one point on five other occasions. His bands were the featured Junior High Bands at two IMEA Conferences. The first time as a concert and clinic with Jim Sewery, LeBlanc Clinician, and again in 1978 with noted composer James Ployhar. While at Fulton he sent an estimated 1500 students to continue with band at Ben Davis High School. He also taught a Woodwind Technique night class to music majors at the old Indiana Central College. He was a judge for ISSMA for 45 years. He received a “Shining Star Award” in 1990 sponsored by WTHR, Channel 13, for “Excellence in Teaching”, and is a member of “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers” since 2002. Since his retirement he has been working part-time for Paige’s Music as a student adviser/music consultant. He is a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Phi Delta Kappa, Indiana Bandmaster’s Association, and past president of Phi Beta Mu. He enjoys reading, playing golf, traveling, and watching sports. He is an avid Colts fans and loves IU basketball and Notre Dame football.

Gene married his high school sweetheart, Barbara L. Beckman in 1957. They recently celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary. They have three children, Mike, Pam Mosser, and Dave, three grandchildren, Ben, Andrea Quack, and Brent Mosser, and are blessed with four great-grandchildren, Noah, Ellie, Jake Smith and Kendal Quack. Gene is a 50 year member of the Plainfield United Church of Christ.