



## Russell C. Vroman

December 9, 1930 - November 14, 2021

Russell Cole Vroman, age 90, of East Peoria, IL passed away on November 14, 2021. He was born on December 9, 1930 in Philipsburg, PA to Russell and Cathryn (Cole) Vroman. He married Donna Negley on February 12, 1954 at the Trivoli Methodist Church with their college pastor officiating.

Russell is survived by Donna, his wife of 67 years, and their children, David (Gail) Vroman of Washington, IL, Susan (Jim) Phillis of Hendersonville, NC, Gary (Julie) Vroman of Hartland, WI, and Barbara Mintert of Lake in the Hills, IL. Russell was a loving and dedicated husband and father who always made his family his top priority. He is also survived by eleven grandchildren, Kristen Vroman, Michael (Diane) Vroman, Matthew Vroman, Katie Vroman, Bradley (Lauren) Phillis, Bethany Phillis, Benjamin Phillis, Jennifer (Kyle) Olmschenk, Sarah Vroman, Jeffrey (Mallory) Mintert, Laura Mintert, and eight great-grandchildren.

Russ was preceded in death by his parents and his only sister, Carol Karow. Russell honorably served in the United States Army, First Cavalry Division, in Japan from 1953 to 1955. He received his Bachelor of Science in Education from Western Illinois University in 1953 and a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology from Bradley University in 1963. He was a music educator for 33 years, teaching the last 25 years at East Peoria Community High School where he was the Music Department Chairman. As Director of Bands, prior to his retirement in 1989, he influenced the lives of hundreds of students at EPCHS, including each of his four children. He was inducted into the

American School Band Directors Association in 1971, served as National Archives Committee Chairman from 1988 to 2014, and in 2007 was awarded the A. Austin Harding Award for dedicated service and outstanding personal contribution. He received the Bradley University Varsity Club Billy Stone Award in 2018. Russell was also a part-time instructor at Illinois Central College in the Behavioral Science Department for 30 years.

Russ was a member of Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, IL, where he served as an elder and trustee. He organized the Grace Symphonic Winds in 1986 and served as conductor until 2000. He shared a home Bible study with Donna and longtime friends for more than 40 years.

Russell served as a volunteer at Proctor Hospital for many years. He also enjoyed 20 years as a private pilot and loved his annual camping and fly-fishing trips back to his childhood home in central Pennsylvania.

The family will be eternally grateful for the wonderful care provided by Dr. Tim LaHood and the staff at the Apostolic Christian Home of Eureka.

A visitation will be held from 4-6 PM on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services in East Peoria. Funeral services officiated by Russell's son-in-law, Dr. James Phillis, will be private. Burial will be at Fondulac Cemetery in East Peoria. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to either Apostolic Christian Home Eureka or Grace Presbyterian Church. Online condolences may be left at [www.GaryDeitersFH.com](http://www.GaryDeitersFH.com).

## Cemetery Details

### Fondulac Cemetery

East Peoria, IL

## Previous Events

### Visitation

NOV 18. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services Inc. - East Peoria  
444 E. Washington Street  
East Peoria, IL 61611

# Tribute Wall



“ *Russell C. Vroman*

October 08, 2023 at 04:50 PM



“ *I had the privilege of having Mr. Vroman as the director of the multi-school honor bands in the 70s. Our joint bands never sounded better! He will be missed!*

**Sue Essig** - November 30, 2021 at 12:05 AM



“ *I started in band in the program Mr. Vroman started in LaSalle school. I then came to EPCHS and wanted to be in concert band not the lower band. It took a lot of work but I met Mr. Vroman's criteria for entrance before the end of year—being last chair meant a great deal to me because it took so much work to meet his standards. I learned excellence, perseverance, and a love of music that goes deep. I was in his band from 1969 to 1973. When I told my sister who was in band too she sent the yearbook picture of his first year at EPCHS with his signature and comments. He was a great educator and band director. Someone earlier mentioned the marches—well I can still play some of Stars and Stripes piccolo/tuba section where he had us stand in front of the band. I am so sorry and offer condolences to all of the family. It is hard but remember he impacted many many people in a wonderful way.*  
*Cynthia Litchfield*

**Cynthia Litchfield** - November 23, 2021 at 04:41 PM

DO

“ Not only was band one of the most enjoyable experiences I had in high school, Mr. V. taught me a lesson that was as valuable as anything I ever learned in life. "Play the game, folks," he would tell us. It's been almost 5 decades, and I still hear him say it in my mind. RIP, Mr. V. You were dearly loved by all of your students.

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**Deb Roberts Okey** - November 23, 2021 at 03:14 PM

LT

“ So sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Vroman. He was my band director at EP in the late 70's and made a huge impact on my life along with providing lots of cherished memories. Memories from the Washington DC band trip (we were a handful) to marching up heart attack hill. Most importantly, learning that with hard work and discipline you can accomplish great things. He was more than just a teacher. He was a life coach. We had one of the best bands in the state and it was a joy to play our songs, some of which were at a very high level, thanks to Mr. Vroman's leadership. I learned piano after starting with his summer school class and enjoy it to this day. Thank you, Mr. Vroman.

*Larry Timberlake, EPCHS '79*

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**Larry Timberlake** - November 22, 2021 at 02:01 PM

JS

“ Prayers to the Vroman family.

*What a treasure he was to all of us who were blessed to have him as our band leader at EPCHS. I still love the National Emblem March even though we played it hundreds of time as we marched in parades and downfield for the football games. Mr. Vroman helped to shape thousands of lives teaching us the importance of teamwork and respect. One of my favorite memories from band was going to Zeller in Peoria to march. The people there said they had room for us to march, they forgot to give him one minor detail. The football sized area was full of trees. It was an adventure trying march in a field full of trees. After reading the obituary I gained even more respect for him finding out he was a Veteran and how he had dedicated his life to the church and volunteering. Thanks for memories. RIP Mr. Vroman.*



*Janice Smith  
EPCHS class of 1974*

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**Janice Smith** - November 20, 2021 at 04:57 PM

RS

“ *I'm not sure there are adequate words for how much we love and appreciate Russ. He and Donna have shown us the love of Jesus in so many ways. While we lived in Peoria they were dear friends, surrogate parents to us and grandparents to our children. We have always said "we want to be like Russ and Donna when we grow up!" They have stayed in touch all these years and we love them so. Russ will be dearly missed. We look forward to our reunion!*

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**Richard and Sarah Schwartz** - November 19, 2021 at 08:29 AM

TP

“ Mr. Vroman was one of my two favorite teachers at EPCHS. I played French Horn and always looked forward to seeing him in Band room. I was very timid and he'd tell me "don't be afraid to make a mistake. If you're gonna make a mistake, make a big one!" I'm grateful as an adult I was able to thank him for how much he meant to me in high school. I get a kick out of watching David conduct the Bradley band and the Municipal Band. It's like watching Mr. Vroman all over again!

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**Tom Pisano** - November 18, 2021 at 11:50 AM

TG

“ Mr Vroman was a wonderful band director who helped shape my love for music early in my life. I know he has joined a heavenly chorus now filled with music that's more beautiful than ever. Gods peace to his family during this time.

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**Teresa (Brandstatter) Granberry** - November 18, 2021 at 08:56 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.



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November 17, 2021 at 09:34 PM

NB

“ Dave (aka John Philip Sousa) and Family,  
Please accept my condolences upon the passing of Russ. I remember him at one time working for Byerly Music in Peoria and I bought a new Leblanc Noblet alto saxophone from him. I believe it was in 1961. I still have it. I was in the band at Limestone High School, Class of 1962. I can't remember if it was during my junior or senior year, our band director, Mr. Morse, was out for a few weeks for a hernia operation and Russ substituted for him during that time. Our whole band really enjoyed him and his expertise and left a very good impression on us. He truly was a great person and educator. You are in my prayers that God will give you strength and comfort you and fill your hearts with all the good and fun memories that he shared with you. I am sure there are many.

Norman Birchler  
Lacon, IL

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**Norman Birchler** - November 17, 2021 at 09:32 PM

DM

“ Mr. Vroman taught us music which was divine but also so much more. I will never forget his use of "the pulpit" to deliver Sermonette 101! So many good memories and always an inspiring message. That band got me through high school and I will never forget the man who led it.

My sincerest condolences to the Vroman family - he truly made a difference in so many lives.

Dave Mejia - Class of 1981

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**Dave Mejia** - November 17, 2021 at 07:24 PM

CR

“ We are deeply saddened to hear of Mr. Vromans passing. Our thoughts are with all your family. Truly, he was a motivational and inspirational man. I'm sure those of us in band feel this way. Most of high school is now a blur. The exception is band. Parades, concerts, field competitions, contest, and of course the trip to Mexico. He sculpted the best from us individually and collectively. He is remembered often and will be greatly missed.

*Craig Redshaw, class of 1975  
Camdenton, Missouri*

*John Redshaw, class of 1969  
Hovland, Minnesota*

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**Craig Redshaw** - November 17, 2021 at 03:18 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.



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November 17, 2021 at 02:29 PM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.



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November 17, 2021 at 01:26 PM

NS

“ *Our love, sympathy and prayers are with you Katie & Family. He sounds like a truly amazing man...*

Nicole Serrano - November 17, 2021 at 01:23 PM

DW

“ *Mr. Vroman was a very kind and caring man. So sorry for your loss.*  
🙏

Donna Sutton Willett - November 17, 2021 at 12:47 PM

BH

“ *Russ was a great educator and person. Whenever I ran into him he was always smiling.  
Deepest condolences to all of the family. May your memories fill your hearts.*

*Beth Kidder Houlihan*

Beth Kidder Houlihan - November 17, 2021 at 11:05 AM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.*



November 17, 2021 at 10:43 AM

LL

“ *Dave and family,  
So sorry to hear of your Dad's passing.  
Lori Luthy*

Lori Luthy - November 17, 2021 at 09:57 AM

TW

“ Our deepest sympathies. Russ was a wonderful friend, teacher and mentor to many. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

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**Ted Wanack** - November 17, 2021 at 09:51 AM

VW

“ I was saddened to hear of Mr. Vroman's passing. He truly was one of a kind. The influence he had on my life will always be remembered. He was my band director from 1970-1974. He always had more confidence and belief in me than I had in myself. He always encouraged excellence, not perfection, but excellence. That is something that has stayed with me through my life. I remember when he came to my grade school and told us about the beginning band program that he was starting. He made the comment then that out of all the high school memories we would have, the band memories would be the best. He was so right. The band was a "family" and we created lasting memories together.

*I appreciated his obituary because it showed facets of his life that I knew nothing about. To me he was always, Mr. Vroman, my band director and the father of my good friend, Dave. The world lost a wonderful man but I am so grateful that he is with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the one day I will see him again.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. Vroman, Dave, Susan, Gary and Barb.*

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**Vickee Widbin** - November 16, 2021 at 10:06 PM

JH

“ Dear Donna and all the Vroman family. You have my deepest sympathy and love and respect for my dear friends Russell and Donna Vroman. It was an honor and pleasure to serve The Vroman family at Lighthouse Buick Gmc in Morton. But that was just the start of a long lasting friendship over the years about many mutual subjects such as music, military experiences, automobile needs, religion, history, and a host of subjects that would come up during our many visits. I also had the privilege of visiting his home and his den of many memorabilia and wonderful history books. What wonderful friends and what a delightful couple ...Russell and Donna Vroman. My great Love and Respect for you.

Your Friend  
Jim Hohulin

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**Jim Hohulin** - November 16, 2021 at 04:42 PM

MS

“ Mr. Vroman taught me to play the clarinet in the 60's at EPCHS. Some of my fondest memories of high school are from marching band and concert band. I can still hear the cadence we marched to up that hill! He was just a very nice, kind, funny and generous man. Condolences to the family. Rest in Heaven, Mr. Vroman! Thank you for your kindness to me.



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**Mary Louise Sieg** - November 16, 2021 at 04:18 PM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.*



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November 16, 2021 at 12:33 PM



“ *Sentimental Dreams was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.*



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November 16, 2021 at 12:19 PM



“ *The Peplinski family sends thoughts and prayers to the Vroman family. Our family enjoyed many years of memories with Mr. Vroman, Angie (EPCHS '82), Robert (EPCHS '85) and Michele (EPCHS '87). Many Saturdays marching in parades, band competitions at ISU & U of I, saying “Good Morning America” from EPCHS football field, playing on the steps of the White House and countless marches up “heart attack hill”. Mr Vroman recommended Angie to Mr. Fogelberg for bassoon lessons, both “Leaders of the Band”!*

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**Peplinski's** - November 16, 2021 at 10:33 AM

LP

“ It was great to be one of his band students in the 60s. As a result of his influence, I became a band director. He loved the LORD Jesus Christ and served him always. My Prayers go out to the family and friends. Dr. Leonard W. Parker

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**Leonard W Parker** - November 16, 2021 at 06:42 AM

JB

“ So very sad, to have to say "good-bye" to him for a while, but we can have one WONDERFUL Thanksgiving in Heaven when we are all together again! I cannot go through a Thanksgiving, or many holidays, without thinking of all of you!!! Some of my fondest memories go back to their wedding in Trivoli! I was the flower girl for their wedding, so I remember standing in that little Methodist Church, for the rehearsal, and letting the heat from the floor register open my skirt, like Marilyn Monroe! Then there was the wedding, and I had been "coached" very firmly to NOT throw all the flowers out of my basket BEFORE I got to the altar. So, I didn't, and I had half a basket left when I got to the end of the aisle. So, like any logical 4-yr-old would do, I just turned the basket over and dumped them all in a pile on the floor! I have been so blessed to be born into the family we share!!! Thinking of, and praying for all of you! (and, it was your dad that came to our grade school when we were choosing band instruments, and told me I should play the flute!) 😊  
Janny (Rodgers) Ballard

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**Jan Rodgers Ballard** - November 15, 2021 at 11:38 PM

ES

“ Mr. Vroman was a marvelous leader and instilled a love of music in his students. In his first year at EPCHS, he was my mothers band leader and she and my father played for him at Grace Presbyterian. He was tough but I was a better musician for it. I still remember some of the test for symphonic band. My condolences to his family and thank him for the gift he gave us. EPCHS 1988.

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**Elizabeth Shults** - November 15, 2021 at 10:46 PM

KE

“ Loved learning from Mr. Vroman: life lessons, music appreciation, music theory, patriotism, etiquette. I still cry every time i hear the star spangled banner or even a Souza march. Prayers for the Vroman family, sorry for your loss.

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**Kathy Sparks Edwards** - November 15, 2021 at 10:12 PM

KJ

“ I had great respect for Mr. Vroman. He was my band instructor at EPCHS. He not only taught me music but about key qualities of being a good person and a leader! I was fortunate to see him a few years ago and tell him those things and what a great impact he made on my life.I am blessed to have been taught by him. Blessings to his family.

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**Kory (Mayo) Jackson** - November 15, 2021 at 09:59 PM

CP

“ I will always remember Mr. Vroman my music teacher. He influenced my love of music. I critique every marching band performance I ever see and appreciate all the lifelong lessons I learned from him. Sending love and condolences to the family.  
Carol (Doudera) Parish EPCHS Class of 1981

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**carol parish** - November 15, 2021 at 09:58 PM

DW

“ He not only influenced his students but every student. I was never in band, but I do remember his dedication to all the students at EPCHS. My deepest sympathies to his family.

Denice Spencer Wilson - November 15, 2021 at 09:35 PM

DS

“ I first met Russ as a fellow volunteer at Proctor Hospital. He was a wonderful and caring man.

Dick Schlicksup - November 15, 2021 at 09:27 PM

WD

“ Russ Vroman was my band director at CJHS and had a lasting impact on me growing up. He was kind and warm, an educator that gave his all in helping his students grow. I ran into him a few times as an adult and enjoyed catching up with him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Wes Drew - November 15, 2021 at 09:00 PM

LN

“ Love and prayers, Carol (Cowell) Navarro purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Russell C. Vroman.



Love and prayers, Carol (Cowell) Navarro - November 15, 2021 at 07:58 PM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Russell C. Vroman.*



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November 15, 2021 at 07:00 PM