



## David L. Parrish

March 14, 1943 - September 13, 2019

David Leonard Parrish, age 76, died peacefully at home on Sept. 13, 2019. Dave was born the second of three children on March 14, 1943, in Detroit, Michigan. He attended Walled Lake Jr. and Sr. High School where he sang tenor in various musicals and plays. He also played trumpet in high school band, ran cross-country, and played softball. Bitten by the music bug, Dave sang in the Youth for Understanding Chorale in 1961, traveling throughout Central and South America. Dave's experience singing in the youth chorale was transformative in that he saw first-hand how music connects and creates bridges across cultures.

In the fall of 1961 Dave enrolled at Central Michigan University (CMU) as a music major. While at CMU Dave sang in musicals, played trumpet in the marching band (Fire Up Chips!) and met his future wife, Mary, who was also studying music. Dave and Mary wed on February 6th, 1965. Shortly after, Dave graduated from CMU with a bachelor's degree in music education.

Dave began his teaching career in Traverse City in the fall of 1965 as the choir director at the junior high. In 1970, Dave and Mary adopted Christopher David Parrish. Chris is now a paramedic firefighter in Benzie County. In 1982 Mary and David were surprised to learn that they were going to have a child. Michael Charles Parrish was born on November 3rd, 1982.

In 1973 Dave earned a master's degree in music education from CMU and continued to teach music in Traverse City. In 1977 Dave was director of Traverse City High School choirs. During this time, he also taught music appreciation. Dave would often recall how the students taught him as much as he taught them. He revealed to them the genius of Mozart, they taught him about the earth-shattering power of Led Zeppelin.

From 1979 to 1986 Dave served as the head of the music department for Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS). He held this position again from 1998-2004.

Dave was involved in a number of community activities outside of teaching. He was a member of the Munson Medical Center Biomedical Ethics Committee from 1986-1994; volunteered as a soccer coach for the YMCA in the early 1990s; directed the Rotary Minstrel Chorus, and directed the Leland Community Sing for over forty years; was a member of the Advisory Council for NMC's "Life Academy" from 2004 to 2014.

Dave was also on the board of Jeff Haas' Building Bridges With Music from 2011 to 2019. Building Bridges seeks to reduce bullying in schools by promoting tolerance using the universal language of music to reach children and bring them together. Dave served on the board until his health forced him to resign in the spring of 2019.

In the 1980s, Dave began studying humanities at CMU and earned a second master's degree. During this time, he met future teaching partner and lifelong friend, Lyn Salathiel. Together at Traverse City Senior High School they developed a revolutionary method of teaching using a team approach. The two designed lessons that utilized art, music, literature, history, film, and poetry to teach a central idea. Building the humanities program was one of Dave's great passions and the sheer joy he experienced while teaching during this time was one of the high points of his career.

Dave was a gift to the world. The humanities revealed in Dave exuberance for life that would continue on until his final days. The sacred was everywhere for him. He found his bliss in fishing (lots and lots of fishing), in family, in Rembrandt or van Gogh, in Mozart and Beethoven, in all the poets, singers, writers, and profound thinkers of the world. The beauty in the world elated Dave. He always saw the best in people, the potential for what could be. The relentless optimist, he never gave up on looking toward the light. Dave touched innumerable lives, and transformed the way people think. He opened up minds to the beauty of the world and brought unconditional love to family and friends. The countless testimonies on social media from former students of Dave attests to the impact he had on this community.

In retirement Dave continued to teach, learn, travel, read, conduct, cook, and fish. In the early 2000s he reunited with Lyn Salathiel and the dynamic duo taught classes through the Extended Education Services for Northwestern Michigan College Life Academy. Dave taught his final class on May 10th, 2019, at NMC's campus day. The theme of the class was "The Power of Work." Dave put off his chemotherapy treatment to teach this class. He summoned all the strength he had and with poise, and the power of his passion for teaching, gave his final lesson. And it was a great one.

Dave was also highly charitable and was a frequent donor to many non-profit

organizations throughout the community and the state of Michigan.

Dave's ashes will be spread at his two favorite places: Bass Lake in Omena, Michigan, and Morro Bay in California. These were sacred spaces to Dave where he felt intimately connected to the natural world.

Dave is preceded in death by his parents, Milton and Bettie (Thorden) Parrish, and brother Donald Parrish. He is survived by brother Paul Parrish, and Paul's son, Nathan Parrish (Ph.D.), sister-in-law Sally (Watt) Parrish of Ann Arbor and her children Susan (Parrish) Push and husband Tony Push, and their children Ashley Push (DPT), and Jacob Push; Mark David Parrish; Steven Paul Parrish and wife Caitlyn and children Ada and Mateo Parrish; sister-in-law Margaret (Priebe) Beery and husband John Beery; nephews and nieces John C. Beery and wife Anne Beery and children Sara Beery, and John William Beery; Michael Beery; Maryanne Beery and husband Eric Synder, (Ph.D.) and their children Margaret and Clara Snyder. Also, dear cousins; Christine (Thorden) Kaninski of Frankfort, MI and Richard Steffan, (Ph.D.) of Maryland.

Dave's kindness, generosity, grace, brilliance, strength, and love will never be forgotten. A Memorial Arts Celebration (AKA: Dave's Final Lesson Plan) will take place on October 12th at Central United Methodist Church at 11:00 am. A visitation will occur before the memorial at 10:00 am. All are welcome to attend.

Those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider a memorial donation in Dave's honor to the Traverse City Music Booster Inc., 412 Webster St. Traverse City, MI 49686. <http://traversecitymusicboosters.com/contact.html>. Donations can also be made to Northwestern Michigan College Children's Choir, 1701 E. Front St. Traverse City, MI 49686 or Building Bridges with Music, P.O. Box 1225, Traverse City, MI 49685.

Please feel free to share your thoughts and memories with Dave's family at his tribute page at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com>.

The family is being cared for by the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral and Cremation Services.

# Events

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**OCT**   **Visitation**                      10:00AM

**12**

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Central United Methodist Church  
222 Cass Street, Traverse City, MI, US

**OCT**   **Memorial Service**                      11:00AM

**12**

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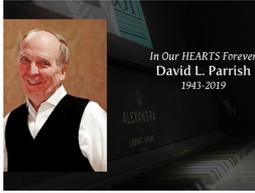
Central United Methodist Church  
222 Cass Street, Traverse City, MI, US

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



**Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home & Cremation Services** - October 11, 2019 at 07:15 AM

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“ An amazing teacher and human being. Would always take time on his own personal time to find out what he could do to help out.  
Taught one of the most eye opening classes I ever took. Will be missed!

**Todd Moser** - October 19, 2019 at 02:33 PM

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“ I was so sorry to hear of Mr. Parrish's passing. He was one of the most influential educators I had. His energy, warmth, keen observational eye, and breadth of instruction across arts, history, government, and politics were foundational for me and many others. After a not so stellar school record, Mr. Parrish saw my potential and selected me for the first academic award I'd ever received. That and his belief in me and so many other students set me on my way out into the world. I am forever thankful to him for his years of community service to me and the youth of Traverse City.

**Jake Bright** - October 18, 2019 at 08:16 PM

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“ My children grew up with Dave and Mary parish at the Leland Sing on Sunday nights in the summer. What a wonderful experience and a great leader and musician who will sorely be missed. Much love and prayers to you all, Nina and Preston Claytor

**Nina Claytor** - October 05, 2019 at 01:00 PM

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“ So sorry that I can not fly up for the Memorial service today, Mary. David was such a huge influence in my life, I am just shocked to hear that he has passed.. The legacy that he has left in his students, colleagues, and most certainly me, is bigger than any of us can put into words. I could write a book on that and just may:). 51 YEARS ago, Dave conducted me on the stage at Central Jr. High in "The Mikado". I was 14. His kindness and encouragement, and musical understanding ( he was only 24 then) were what formed this little girl's dreams into confidence... because words SO matter at that age!!! I know there are 1,000 other former students out there like me that know what I am saying....I will look forward to that BIG choir reunion "upstairs" with David, Mel, and one. heck of a tenor section with Dave singing again!! I remember his "Comfort Ye "from Messiah maybe 40 years ago!?? This guy. could SING! May The Lord bless you and keep you, and make his face to shine upon you, and give you peace. Patty Chamberlain, North Palm Beach, FL

**Patty Chamberlain** - October 05, 2019 at 10:17 AM

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“ How much joy Dave and Mary brought to us over many summers at the Leland Sunday Night Sings! I am not surprised to learn from Dave's obituary how much joy he brought to so many others.

**Susan Grogan Faller** - October 04, 2019 at 02:19 PM

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“ Dave epitomized the joy of learning and shared experiences. He was not only a teacher and mentor but a valuable member of our broader community.. Kind and respectful - a friend to all..  
Jan and Carol Hale

**Carol J Hale** - September 26, 2019 at 06:54 PM

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“ I had Dave Parrish for a humanities teacher at TCHS a LONG time ago. One day he played a record of part of the Carmina Burana for us; I had never heard it before but instantly knew I had to have it. He made me a cassette tape of the Carmina Burana from the record, which I kept and played for years (and probably still have somewhere). To this day when I hear the Carmina Burana I remember him and I thank him for that tape.

Laurie Page Leaman, TCHS 1987

**Laurie Leaman** - September 23, 2019 at 09:35 PM



“ We have known Dave and Mary Beth for many years and it's been my pleasure to sing both under his direction and as a fellow choir member at Central United Methodist Choir. Dave always imparted his ideas and style in a warm and courteous manner, I particularly appreciated how eagerly he seemed to share, bubbling and almost chuckling as he would recall a special happening or experience. I always felt it made him very happy, in particular, to conduct. Very admirable, also, was his quiet and dignified handling of his long battle with illness. We are sad in his passing and our hearts and prayers are with Mary and his beloved family. God be near to each one and bring comfort.

Elsie & Don Randall

Elsie Randall - September 23, 2019 at 02:33 PM

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“ Thinking of Michael Berry and his entire family.  
Thank you, David, for all of the different ways you gave your gifts to our community; including on the ethics committee at Munson.  
You'll remain a forever role model for us.  
Peace and love,  
Susan Odgers & Tom Mair

susan odgers - September 22, 2019 at 05:08 PM

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“ Dave and Mary were a part of our summers in Leland for decades at the Sunday Night Sing. What fun he brought to our family and everyone in the community. Singing there nurtured a love of singing in our four children. Mary, on behalf of the Burr family, we send our deepest condolences.

Corey Burr - September 20, 2019 at 06:09 PM

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“ Dave was a beloved colleague and friend. So many were so blessed to share his creative gift and vision. He was a true gentleman of integrity who will be missed in this community.  
Our deepest sympathy to Mary , Michael and family.  
Pat Gallagher

Patricia Gallagher - September 19, 2019 at 12:59 PM



“ I am saddened to learn of Dave’s passing. Dave was a true gentleman. I still remember the informative and fun classes that DAVE and Lyn Salathiel brought to our community.  
Condolences to Mary and family. Kay Jerome

**kay Jerome** - September 18, 2019 at 08:59 AM

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“ I am incredibly sad to hear of Dave's passing. He was a gentle soul who brought positivity into every interaction we had -- always with a smile, wave or kind word. I will miss his regular presence at the Commons. Much love to Mary, his family and all who knew him.

**Christie Minervini** - September 18, 2019 at 07:25 AM

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“ My heart is heavy for Mrs. Parrish and family for the loss of this very amazing man. I am so honored to have known Mr. Parrish -- he has touched the lives of so many in this community. My daughter, Peggy Owens, is in her 2nd year of college studying music, and I credit Mr. & Mrs. Parrish for their influence in nurturing the early part of her journey. I will cherish the memory of this connection to our family forever. Heaven has gained an exquisite soul. May Mrs. Parrish and her family find peace in the love we all shared for him.

Carey Owens

**Carey Owens** - September 17, 2019 at 12:39 PM

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“ You were a grand and glorious teacher, always brimming with ideas and unique insights. Thank you for a friendship that goes back so many years. Godspeed.  
Lyn Salathiel

**Lyndon Salathiel** - September 17, 2019 at 12:33 PM

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“ I will never forget the Humanities classes with Mr. Parrish and Mr. Salatheil. It was obvious he cared deeply about enriching the minds of his students. My sincere condolences to his family - he was a wonderful human being.

**Benjamin Peek** - September 17, 2019 at 11:36 AM

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“ Dave Parrish touched many lives. Dave and Mary have done a lot for our children and our community. Our sons had excellent instruction in vocal arts due to their passion and willingness to give to others. He will not be forgotten. We were blessed to have him in our lives.

The Barresi family (Nick and Josh Barresi participated in NMC Children's Choir for years)

**Julia Barresi** - September 17, 2019 at 08:04 AM

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“ Very great teacher, understanding and calm. I couldn't have asked for a better experience with any other teachers! My love is sent out to his family and friends



**cassi** - September 16, 2019 at 08:58 PM

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“ What loss of well educated man and father to my good friend Chris & Katrina and Steven! My you educate our good lord on the finer points of music.

**Christian Stretlein** - September 16, 2019 at 04:44 PM

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“ So very sad to hear of Dave's passing. He and Mary gave so much of themselves and their gifts to the children and music programs in Traverse City. I feel blessed for the years that he, Lyn Salathiel and I shared coffee in the Music Library. Sincere condolences, Mary and Michael.

**Cinda and Kit Simmons** - September 16, 2019 at 11:07 AM

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“ So sad to read of Dave's passing. A wonderful man who gave so much to so many. Mary, we send our love and condolences.

**Gaila Mallery** - September 15, 2019 at 07:35 PM

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“ Dave was a fantastic colleague and friend. I will always remember him with love for the way he welcomed me to Traverse City and supported me as a teacher. What a fantastic musician & beautiful person. The world has lost one of the really great human beings.

**Patricia Brumbaugh** - September 14, 2019 at 09:05 PM

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“ He was a great music teacher and an all around great person. Loved time I had with him in high school. My deepest, heart felt condolences.

**Mary Kadrovach Coyne** - September 14, 2019 at 05:05 PM