

In Memoriam

James Donald Ator, October 15, 1938 - February 5, 2022

Professor Emeritus Dr. James Ator served the IPFW music faculty as Professor of Saxophone, Composition, and Theory from 1973 to 2002. For those 29 years he taught saxophone, served as coordinator of music theory and aural skills, served as Music Department Chair several times, and directed the IPFW Jazz Ensemble toward the end of his career. He was very dedicated to the University, having been instrumental in the early stages of the Department of Music in Kettler Hall under Dr. Andrew Harper, Chair. Jim and Dr. Masson Robertson, pianist, were the faculty, joined later by Dr. Joseph Meyers, Professor of Voice.

Jim formed the IPFW saxophone quartet, which continues to be a prominent performing ensemble on campus. Jim was also a prolific composer and arranger until 2021, frequently performing his own works in Music Department Faculty Artist Recitals. After his retirement from IPFW, Jim remained a dedicated teacher, working with students at DeKalb High School and North Side High School.

The School of Music faculty will deeply miss our valued colleague but are grateful to be the beneficiaries of his extraordinary work and lasting legacy. He was a colorful and empathetic personality, a well-liked and very successful teacher and a valued colleague. Jim is survived by his wife of 34 years, Irene, who continues to serve as faculty in the PFW School of Music.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Fort Wayne Children's Choir or to the Adah Ator Music Scholarship at Purdue University Fort Wayne.