



Duane Dean McKeachie

March 17, 1926 - January 17, 2021

Duane Dean McKeachie was born on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1926. He grew up in rural Oakland County with his parents, two brothers, and sister at the corner of McKeachie and White Lake Roads.

Duane attended a powerhouse one-room country school during the Great Depression where his father taught the Three Rs to eight grades of the children of relatives and the many farmers who lived nearby.

Duane also developed traits recognizable by many who would come to know him in the future: how to be genuinely interested in other people, the power of being a good listener, and how to be a good friend. He was unselfish, didn't complain, and was not critical of others. Along the way he became an Eagle Scout.

Duane attended Holly High School where he was a member of the varsity football, basketball, and baseball teams. He played a trumpet in the band and was an accomplished piano player. He had a singing voice like Nat King Cole and later sang at many weddings, public events, and with friends around the piano at parties. At 17, Duane graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1943. With America at War, Duane went to Ann Arbor to study mathematics and engineering at the University of Michigan. On weekends he played the string bass in a jazz band downtown or at parties on campus. On Saturdays in the fall he played his trumpet in the Michigan Marching Band under the direction of legendary conductor William D. Revelli. Duane and the band rode the train to Pasadena, California to perform in the 1948 Rose Bowl. He sang in the

Choral Union and played on the baseball team in the spring. Duane enrolled in the Navy's V-12 program and was training to be a damage control assessor on ships in the South Pacific when the War ended in August, 1945. He graduated from U of M with Bachelors and Masters degrees.

In 1949 Duane was hired to teach Mathematics and Mechanical Engineering at General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan (now Kettering University).

Professor McKeachie was a distinguished educator, well-liked by students and his colleagues. He retired after 57 years – just past his 80th birthday. He retained a strong connection to Kettering throughout his remaining years.

Duane married Joyce Gudith on June 2, 1951. They busied themselves raising two sons in Flint Township, playing bridge with other mathematicians and their wives, and attending Michigan football games. Duane attended every home game for nearly 70 years, as well as many away games.

Duane participated in GMI golf and bowling leagues for many years. He shot in the low 40s and bowled in the 160s during his best seasons.

Duane died on January 17, 2021 age 94 5/6 after bravely battling Parkinson's Disease for several years.

Duane is survived by, Joyce, his wife of nearly 70 years; his brother Mel; sons Phil and Bruce (Janette); grandchildren Ryan (Ashley), Stephanie (Mike), Andrew, and Heather; and great-grandchildren Reece, Bo, and Jase.

Duane was preceded in death by his parents, Bert and Edith, sister, Joyce, and brother Wilbert.

Duane McKeachie has left behind a legacy of what it means to live a life well-lived. His gifts of intelligence, kindness - and as an athlete and musician - will live on through his family, students, and peers.

A public memorial service is anticipated sometime later this year. A private burial will take place this week at White Lake Cemetery with a handful of immediate family members.

Cemetery Details

White Lake Cemetery

McKeachie Rd. and White Lake Rd.
White Lake, MI 48383

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

GR

“ I doubt he would remember me. He was the professor of a junior level class in the fall of 1963. A really fine man and instructor. Seemingly without ego, always pleasant. I am grateful Kettering recognized him in it's Spring Magazine. I had not heard of the McKeachie-Brown founders room. I also enjoyed Professor Brown for Calculus III. My condolences. Gary Ross, '66, Parkville, MO.

Gary Ross - July 30, 2021 at 02:27 PM

DZ

“ Duane was my Operational Calculus teacher in 1956 and my fifth-year advisor for awhile in 1957. I recall a conversation we had when I expressed my interest in becoming a college teacher and he advised me to go for a PhD and then I could do as I wished. So I did and following a 35 year career performing experiments in the Allison Gas Turbine Laboratory, I spent the next 30 years on the adjunct faculties of IUPUI and ERAU teaching math, Physics, and engineering courses. Duane was my role model and inspiration for life. I am so sorry to learn of his passing. I will always have fond memories of Professor McKeachie.
Don Zimmerman, GMI 1957

Don Zimmerman - June 13, 2021 at 04:19 PM

EB

“ I was a GMI student 1962-66 and "Mckeach-the-Teach" was one of my teachers. He was one of the most respected and "sure hope we get him" teachers for the time. God blessed thousands of us with his with, his charm, and especially with his gifts as a teacher.

John Buesing

E John Bbuesing - June 10, 2021 at 01:18 PM

GM

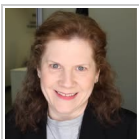
“ I was a student at GMI in the mid 50's and Dr. McKeachie was my Instructor. I was struggling with the course work and he took an inordinate amount of time to help me understand the work. I still remember after 67 years his kindness that helped me to persevere and ultimately graduate from GMI and have a successful career with General Motors. His kindness and understanding some 60 years ago had a profound impact on my life. Now in my mid eighties I will always remember him and be forever thankful for his kindness , understanding and support way back then.

Gerard Morrison - June 05, 2021 at 05:13 PM

KD

“ I was saddened to learn of Prof McKeachie's passing from the GMI Alumni magazine. I have said this for 30 years and I have never wavered in my opinion: Duane McKeachie was the best professor I encountered in my time in Flint. And in addition to that, he was a really nice, kind and friendly person. May his memory be eternal.

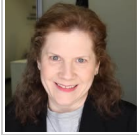
K Diamond - June 04, 2021 at 06:59 PM



“ Laura Ruhala purchased the Mrs. Fields Nibblers[®] Sympathy Basket for the family of Duane Dean McKeachie.



Laura Ruhala - February 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM



“ Professor McKeachie was SO wonderful! I had many classes with him, and I was so honored when he attended my wedding.

I am now a professor myself, and every semester I tell my students specifically, and by name, about Professor McKeachie. I was at GMI from 86-91 and was very fortunate to randomly have Prof. McKeachie for a required math class. I liked him so much that I continued to take him for both required classes and electives. At the time, GMI did not offer a minor in mathematics, but then the school decided to offer a math minor. Prof. McKeachie told me about this change and that I was just one class away from having earned the minor. He offered me the opportunity to do Linear Algebra as an independent study, and we met in the cafeteria weekly during my work-section so that he could teach me linear algebra over coffee. I then, due to his kindness and skill, became the first student to get a math minor at GMI!

This is the story that I have told my Mechanical Engineering freshmen for the past 20 years... about the difference that an amazing professor, such as Prof. McKeachie, can make in someone's life. He is a big reason that I am a professor.... and if I can even be 1/10 as good as Prof. McKeachie, my students will be well served!

*Laura Ruhala, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Kennesaw State University
GMI Class of 1991*

Laura Ruhala - February 06, 2021 at 11:45 PM

LG

“ As a GMI student from 1950-54 I was privileged to have Professor McKeachie as an instructor for several math classes. He was able to help me understand the more complex facets of differential equations that brought me through to graduation. He was patient and would take whatever time was necessary to assist students like me. He, along with other top-notch instructors at GMI\Kettering, is what makes being a student there so valuable.

Lloyd Gomez, '54 BME '55

Lloyd E. Gomez - February 06, 2021 at 04:54 PM

CL

“ Remember Duane from Huff Reunions, and seeing him out and about. Always so pleasant and interested in what was happening with different family members, a truly great person. Carolyn Huff Hewitt Lynch

Carolyn Huff Hewitt Lynch - February 05, 2021 at 08:16 PM

AO

“ Professor McKeachie was my FAVORITE mathematics teacher of all time! I had him my very first quarter at GMI for Calculus 1 and he made it fun, interesting, and understandable. I will never forget that smile, cheery and upbeat manner, and genuinely fun demeanor that made the class so entertaining. I send my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

*Many Blessings,
Audrey Pool O'Neal, Ph.D.*

Audrey Pool O'Neal - February 04, 2021 at 08:23 PM

BM

“ Professor McKeachie was a wonderful teacher and an extraordinary human being. I was his student studying engineering mechanics. He was passionate about the subject matter, always approachable. What a kind person.

Brian McNalley
Class of '81

Brian McNalley - February 04, 2021 at 07:54 PM

JL

“ Mr. Mckeachie was one of my favorite teachers at GMI. He had a great ability to make difficult topics seem clear. I was fortunate to have him as a Fifth Year advisor. I fondly remember seeing him at my granddaughter's Robot Society initiation. May he Rest In Peace.

John W Lesich - February 04, 2021 at 12:39 PM

SG

“ Professor McKeachie was a wonderful person and the best teacher I ever had (GMI 73-78). His kindness and encouragement had a profound impact. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and all those who he touched.

Steve Gansler

Stephen Gansler - February 04, 2021 at 10:49 AM

CS

“ Dear Joyce, Philip, Bruce and families,
We will always remember visits with Duane and Joyce at family reunions and gatherings and in particular will remember the last one, less than two years ago, at the home of Karen and Zeke Aboukarroum. It was a fine summer day and Duane shared some family stories. He was a kind and gentle soul, he always had a twinkle in his eyes (like his dad), and his smile could light up a room. He had such a positive impact on so many lives and we are so proud that he was our cousin. Duane's legacy will live on, and the wonderful life he led. He was an inspiration to us all.
With loving memories, first cousins, Connie Middleton, Colleen Seale and families

Colleen Seale - January 24, 2021 at 07:37 PM



“ Getting to visit with Uncle Duane was always one of the highlights of any trip to see the 'McKeachie' side of the family in Michigan. The qualities so many have pointed out about him (great listener, lifelong learner and his inquisitive nature, as well his general interest in your life) were so appreciated. It would always amaze me his recall of some hobby, interest, or random detail of my life that he would check in about, whether it was touring life on the road with a competitive Drum and Bugle corps, the retail operations of a fading (soon to be extinct) Music Store chain, or myriad other interests of mine. If I can develop into half the listener and learner Duane always was, it would be an incredible feat. We already miss his jovial, friendly and engaging persona so much! Thinking of Joyce, Bruce and Phil and their families during this incredibly sad time.

Much Love,
Keith McKeachie
(Middle son of Duane's brother, Mel)

Keith McKeachie - January 22, 2021 at 04:58 PM

JM

Mr. Mckeachie was a fine teacher and fine human being. I enjoyed knowing him over 70 years. I met him at GMI in 1951 and last saw him at at the Kettering/GMI 100 year celebration. I talked to him over the phone in September of 2020. My sympathy to all close to him. -John Mahoney, Class of 55

John Mahoney - February 04, 2021 at 10:37 AM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Duane Dean McKeachie.



January 22, 2021 at 01:00 PM

BM

“ This is Brad Mitchell (Bruce and Barb Mitchell's youngest son). I knew Duane from when I was very young. He and Joyce were always at the family gatherings whatever they happen to have been. Duane always approached me and asked me what I was up to and made me feel like I was the focus of all his attention. So every time I saw him it was always a pleasure. 2009 was the last time I saw Duane at my fathers calling hours and he was a witty as always with lots of good laughter. I wish for your family that this was an easier time to allow for grieving face to face. Prayers for Joyce and family.

Brad Mitchell - January 21, 2021 at 05:13 PM

LD

“ Uncle Duane. the family historian. After our grandmother died, there was the endless task of going through the White Lake home. Uncle Duane took on the responsibility of collecting boxes and boxes of great historical family happenings. Our grandmother saved every letter and newspaper article about the family. At family reunions Uncle Duane would have an envelope for each family member, enclosed with one of the letters or articles which he had searched out in their basement. Between Duane and Wilbert, the family history was shared with all. Sure will miss you, Uncle Dyane! My prayers and thoughts go out to Aunt Joyce and the family.
Linda McKeachie Dicks, oldest daughter of Wilbert McKeachie

Linda and Larry Dicks - January 21, 2021 at 10:27 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Duane Dean McKeachie.



January 20, 2021 at 03:18 PM

TP

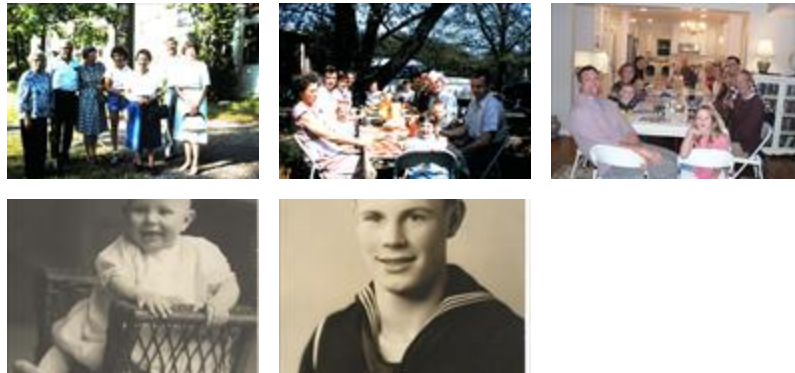
“ Professor McKeachie was always a friendly face to me during my time at GMI (83-88). He always had a kind word and took an interest in a fellow Holly High Alum. He is the reason I took a math class as an elective just to have the opportunity to have him as a Professor. He will be missed. My thoughts and prayers for all those who also miss him.

Tom Pelton

Tom Pelton - January 20, 2021 at 12:15 PM

BM

“ 17 files added to the album Memories Album



Bruce McKeachie - January 19, 2021 at 04:24 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Duane Dean McKeachie.



January 19, 2021 at 01:34 PM

KF

“ *One of my favorite people. So sorry to see Duane has passed. Condolences to Joyce and the rest of the family*

ken peters and family - January 19, 2021 at 01:18 PM



“ *Country Basket Blooms* was purchased for the family of Duane Dean McKeachie.



January 19, 2021 at 12:59 AM

BM

“ 30 files added to the album Memories Album



Bruce McKeachie - January 18, 2021 at 08:07 PM