



# James Spencer Fay

JAN 23, 1945 - JUL 27, 2025



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## **James Spencer Fay**

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**J**ames Spencer Fay, DMA passed away on July 27, 2025, in Annapolis, Maryland. He was born on January 23, 1945, in New York City (the Bronx) to Adelaide Leontine Fay (nee Garcia), a dancer, and Clifton Lyman Fay, a drummer.

A dedicated educator and accomplished musician, Dr. Fay spent 49 years as a Professor of Music at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), where he began leading the music department in 1973. He earned degrees in clarinet performance from the Peabody Conservatory, Catholic University, and the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where he co-founded the campus chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

At NVCC, he championed innovation in music education—introducing music technology and developing courses on technology and music copyright. Jim conducted the Annandale-NVCC orchestra. He was a co-founder of the international Klarinet Mailing List and also created a ragtime ensemble that drew upon the Smithsonian’s collection of ragtime sheet music.

Dr. Fay performed with numerous distinguished ensembles throughout his career, including the United States Air Force Band (Washington, D.C.), the North Carolina Symphony, and the National Concert Band of America. He volunteered with both the Virginia Grand Military Band and the Maryland Defense Force Band. He also had the privilege of teaching clarinet to the Michigan All-State musicians at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, MI.

Beyond academia and performance, Dr. Fay shared his expertise and time through volunteer service. His passion for communications began early through amateur radio in Lanoka Harbor, NJ, and continued with ARES/RACES throughout his life. He also found joy and purpose working with Guiding Eyes for the Blind and Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB). He served in the Maryland Defense Force for a decade, contributing in both communications and music, and concluded his service career with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Annapolis.



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Jim started messing about in boats in NJ as a child, he turned to the water again at Interlochen along with his future wife. Together they sailed their J/22, Trouvere, eventually calling Annapolis and the Severn Grove community home. He was active with the Severn Sailing Association, participating in race committees, measurement teams, and events including the Governor's Cup and the 2012 Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race—where he crewed aboard Woodwind and returned aboard Pride of Baltimore. Jim, Barbara and Trouvere especially enjoyed supporting national women's sailing events.

Dr. Fay is survived by his wife of 37 years, Barbara S. Fay; his sister, Barbara A. Fay, daughters, Heather Fay of Montana, Jennifer Pratt of Virginia and Stephanie Mckinney of California as well as grandsons and a niece and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held in Annapolis in early October. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Annapolis Musicians Fund for Musicians (AMFM) at <https://am-fm.org> or by mail to P.O. Box 6262, Annapolis, MD 21401. God speed Jim, may you know you are loved and cherished by many.



# Memories only last if you share them

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