



Walter Carl Engstrom

May 25, 1932 - August 18, 2020

Walter Carl Engstrom passed away peacefully on August 18, 2020. He leaves behind a legacy of family, leadership, music making and long-time friendships.

Wally was born on May 25, 1932 in Rockford, Illinois to Carl and Margaret Engstrom, both first-generation Swedish immigrants. In his youth he was like many young boys at the time in that he played baseball and basketball, but even more important to him was playing the trumpet, both in school and in the Salvation Army Band. His family moved to Kingsburg, CA in 1948, where Wally would reside for the rest of his life. In 1954, after graduating from Fresno State with a degree in Music Education, he married the love of his life, Barbara Jacobson, and began teaching music in various public schools around the area. After a few years, he landed a job teaching band and orchestra at Redwood High School in Visalia, and for many years that became his passion. His band appeared in many parades, halftime shows, and went on several memorable trips. The orchestra consistently gained superior ratings at festivals and played for school musicals such as Oklahoma and My Fair Lady. Eventually, Wally took on new responsibilities as Music Coordinator for the Visalia Unified School District and also as Director of Adult Education. After more than a decade in these roles, he decided it was time to retire to a life filled with traveling and relaxing with friends and family.

Wally served his community in many ways, as Director of Kingsburg's Swedish Festival, as a member of the YMCA's Y's Men, as co-founder and Director of the La Sierra Music Camp, as founder of the Visalia Band Review, as Director of the Kingsburg Methodist Church Choir, as Chair of the Kingsburg Hospital Board of Directors, and for 13 years as the Director of the Kingsburg City Band, finally relinquishing the baton to his son Dale, but continuing to play trumpet in the group until well into his 70s.

Wally loved his family and all the family gatherings. He was known for his happy disposition ("jolly Wally") and for his love of talking with just about anyone with whom he came into contact.

He is preceded in death by his son Steve, as well as his brothers Rudy and Ken. He is survived by his wife Barbara, daughter-in-law Sheryl, sons Dale (Lucretia) and Larry (Kris), along with 9 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren (with another expected in December).

Visitation/viewing for the public will take place on Sunday, August 30 from 2-6pm at the Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel located at 1588 Lincoln Street in Kingsburg.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, a private (immediate family only) graveside service will be held at the Kingsburg Cemetery. The family is planning a celebration of life service sometime in 2021. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Kingsburg City Band and mailed to 2030 Mariposa St, Kingsburg, CA 93631 (checks should be made out to Kingsburg Media Foundation; put Wally in the memo and they will be posted to the city band account in his memory).

Events

AUG **Viewing** 02:00PM - 06:00PM

30

Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel

1588 Lincoln Street, Kingsburg, CA, US, 93631

Comments



“ This gentleman may have been my all-time favorite teacher. What a kind person he was, always upbeat and encouraging. We loved him. I know this is a great loss to his family and friends.

Ann Melanie Warden Zellmer

Ann Zellmer - January 16 at 09:37 PM



“ Such a great teacher and always that wonderful smile. Blessed to be a part of jazz, pep, marching, concert bands, and orchestra '70-'73. Amazing experiences, especially the trip to Mexico City.

Mr. Engstrom was exceptional and dearly loved by all

Steve Blankenship - December 02, 2020 at 08:34 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers are with the Engstrom family in their loss of a great man. I had the pleasure of having Mr Engstrom for band at Redwood High School. Appreciated his patience and encouragement which he bestowed on all the band class. He will be greatly missed.

Glenda Fly - October 11, 2020 at 06:53 AM



“ Mr Engstrom was a great role model for me as a trumpet player at union school. He was a great man.

Abby Northcutt - September 16, 2020 at 08:27 PM



“ Band was one of my classes during my sophomore year at Redwood High School when Mr. Engstrom became Director. He sparked a lot of energy, fun, music enjoyment and dedication to become a really good marching band. He enrolled us in a lot of band trips that I can still remember today going to USC Band Day, Castle Air Base and many parades and band concerts in Visalia and neighboring communities. Thanks to Mr. Engstrom my enjoyment of all types of music has been cemented for life.

Hector Huerta - September 10, 2020 at 02:17 PM



“ I met Wally when I was 19 years old and he hired me as a counselor at La Sierra Music Camp. That was the first year of the camp and I worked there all through college and for a year or two after I was married. That experience was life changing for me and led to my eventual career as a teacher for 18 years and a high school counselor for 20 years. Wally was such a wonderful mentor and a very kind, loving man. I'm sure he touched many lives during his long career as a music teacher. He will always have a special place in my heart.

Sue Nyberg - September 03, 2020 at 10:54 PM



“ Such a great guy. I remember him well and his love of people and community. When I was a little kid hanging out with my dad at the Y's men Christmas tree lot every December he would come around telling stories and making fun. Even as a little kid I knew this guy was special. As an adult returning home to live in Kingsburg I was delighted to see him playing his trumpet in the Kingsburg City Band. He was a nice man and he will be missed.

Joel R. Ellberg writing for all the Ellberg's who knew him and keep his memory in our hearts.

Joel Ellberg - September 02, 2020 at 03:07 PM



“ Loved when you all would come to the restaurant for breakfast..
You will be missed
Dina Day

Dina - September 01, 2020 at 11:27 AM



“ What a wonderful band director he was for me! Hey was creative and innovative! He started the first jazz studio band and that first year we won 1st and 2nd place in Long Beach competition the first time Redwood had competed. HE WAS A PEOPLE BUILDER!

Fortunate to see Mr. Engstrom again after 30 years at the Kingsburg Concert in the park. I had just moved back from Denver, Colorado, and was invited to go to concert and lo' and behold Mr. Engstrom on the trumpet, and his son was directing!! I do love Mr. Engstrom very much and give my hearty out to the family. You all will be in our prayers. Mr. Engstrom is in my heart and in my music. I will never forget what he did for me!

- Love and prayers from
Alberto & Lydia Corrales



Alberto Corrales - August 30, 2020 at 07:53 PM



“ I first met Wally in 5th grade. He started a drum and bugle Corp in Visalia and had me play each piece so the other students would know what it was suppose to sound like. Me also made me and my now husband compete for 1st chair during summer school although we played different instruments. I loved Wally. He was always so happy and always had a smile. He was a very special and important person in my life.

Kathy Yturralde-Peterspn - August 30, 2020 at 04:32 PM



“ Wally was my band teacher at Divisadero. I enjoyed band and he made it a lot of fun. He was a great man. Thanks for sharing him with all the students he taught. My prayers are with his family. Naomi (Davis) Faucett.

Naomi (Davis) Faucett - August 28, 2020 at 07:30 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Jill Engstrom - August 28, 2020 at 05:33 PM



“ We have great memories of working with Wally, and helping out at La Sierra Music Camp. He was a wonderful, caring man and everyone felt special because of the way he treated them. Greg worked on the music team under Wally's direction. He always had the students and the program first in his priorities. He was responsible for having the music team teach during the classroom teachers' break to ensure the students had a great music education. Wally was a boss, a dear friend and a fellow music teacher to Greg. Wally directed the adult community band in Visalia. I was honored to be able to play under his kind direction. He made music fun while still teaching us how to improve. We will miss you dearly. We hope you know you all are in our prayers and thoughts at this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Greg and Jeanne Eckes

JEANNE ECKES - August 28, 2020 at 05:01 PM



“ Heavenly Light was purchased for the family of Walter Carl Engstrom.



August 26, 2020 at 12:05 AM



“ Wally was my Goshen band teacher back in about 1964. He directed me to the trombone which I enjoyed but when I got to high school football squeezed it out. Wally was Mr. Music, everyone enjoyed it when he created music, either directing or playing. I was also good friends with Steve but never put the two together. People like Wally have so much good positive affect on society. I am grateful for having known both Wally and Steve and am sorry to have lost them. May God's blessing and comfort be with the family.

Randy Ford, Louisville TN



Randy Ford - August 24, 2020 at 08:19 PM



“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Mike Engstrom - August 23, 2020 at 11:37 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Dale Engstrom - August 23, 2020 at 06:16 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Dale Engstrom - August 23, 2020 at 06:09 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers go out to the family of Wally. He was a true leader in our community. His hard work in making Kingsburg a better place will be missed ,But, through his many talents and the gifts he gave Kingsburg I believe will continue on by us all.
He gave strong leadership to the Kingsburg Hospital Board which he served on for years and as I serve on the board today I remember his encouragement and leadership .
Wally Engstrom's Swedish heritage was very obvious in making Kingsburg stand out by working on many activities in the community and along with sharing his music skills at so many functions!
He was true a Citizen of the Year for Kingsburg!! I will miss you Wally. Gary Nelson

Gary Nelson - August 23, 2020 at 03:23 PM



“ Uncle Wally always had a smile on his face. With every conversation, you felt better after talking to him than you did when the conversation started. He loved the Lord!

Brad Jacobson

Brad Jacobson - August 21, 2020 at 10:53 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Memories Album



Donald Lloyd Johnson - August 21, 2020 at 05:40 PM



“ So sorry to hear about Mr. Engstroms’s passing! He was one of my favorite teachers at Redwood High School. I played in the orchestra for three years and enjoyed the musicals and attending his class. He was truly a gentleman and great teacher! My deepest condolences to his family.
Wanda Solis Montoya

Wanda Montoya - August 20, 2020 at 10:13 PM



“ So sorry to hear about Uncle Wally's passing. My thoughts and prayers go to all the family. Love Karen (Vaughan) Lopez.

Karen Lopez - August 20, 2020 at 06:18 PM



“ I am so sorry for the family’s loss. What a wonderful life he had, and such a music legacy in Dale and Larry and his daughter-in-law, Kris. May his memory always be blessed. Patty (Carrico) Dickens in Reno.

patty dickens - August 23, 2020 at 01:28 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Walter Carl Engstrom.



August 20, 2020 at 03:10 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Walter Carl Engstrom.



August 19, 2020 at 11:14 PM