



Artis (Art) Ratley

March 30, 2023

Artis (Art) Ratley was born in Carthage, Texas, son of Willie Kent Ratley and Ellender Eugenia Attaway, on April 21, 1933. He treasured the Piney Woods of East Texas where he graduated from Carthage High School and attended Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas where he earned a BA in Music and an MA in Music Education. He served in the Army at Fort Sam Houston where he played euphonium in the Fourth Army Band, then moved to Harlingen, Texas after his discharge. He taught band in Harlingen from 1960 to 1964; then moved to McAllen, Texas where he taught band until retiring in 2000. He was a founding member of the McAllen Town Band, a member of several remote-control flying clubs, a long-time member of the First United Methodist Church in McAllen, an annual attendee at the Fourth Army Band Reunion for approximately 30 years, and an inductee to the Rio Grande Valley Band Director's Hall of Fame.

Art loved the Rio Grande Valley and its multicultural community, including the Spanish and Mexican influence. He enjoyed the mariachi bands and the folklorico dance performances at the regional high schools. He frequently attended high school and university music and band performances, encouraging students in their pursuits. Art served as a judge during marching season and concert contest during his teaching career and after retirement, and he was the voice of the Pigskin Marching Band competition for many years.

Art is preceded in death by his wife, Mary Selma Torres Ratley; father, Willie Kent Ratley and mother, Ellender Eugenia Attaway Ratley; his brother Willie Gene Ratley (wife Nellie Clarine Williams Ratley Rogers), sister Jewel Ophelia (Sis) Ratley Westmoreland (husband Lawrence Elton), sister Patricia Ratley Meador, niece Janis (Sissy) Ratley Chauvin (Allen), and niece Sally Daniels (husband Tom).

Art is succeeded by his two daughters, Laura Jean Ratley Nunn of San Marcos, Texas and Linda Denise Ratley Lynch of Fruita, Colorado; grandchildren Daniel Juan Tamayo of California; Anthony Nicolaus Tamayo, Linda Jean Billings, Matthew Paul Henkel, and Zachary Davis Henkel; great grandchildren Anthony Nicolaus Tamayo, Natasha Faye Tamayo, Ethan Plata, Case Wayne Curl, and Rylee Jean Curl, all of the Rio Grande Valley; and nieces and nephews across south Louisiana, Texas, and Florida.

Mr. Ratley has been remembered fondly by band students throughout the years. He typically remembered students' names and the instrument they played, often having multiple generations as students. His daughters, Laura and Linda, grew up with strong music appreciation, including marching bands and concert performances. He began his teaching years in McAllen at the original McAllen High School where the Chase Bank Tower is now located.

Friends and family will gather for a visitation at 1:00p.m. on Monday, April 3, 2023 at the Hawthorn Funeral Home, 307 W. Wellington St., in Carthage, Texas, 903-693-3816 where a 2:00pm Chapel Service will occur. Immediately following, Mr. Ratley will be interred at Shady Grove Cemetery in Carthage, Texas; a memorial service will be held in McAllen in the coming months.

In lieu of floral tributes, donations may be sent to the McAllen Wind Ensemble Scholarship Fund, 1921 N 25th St, McAllen, TX 78501 in Art's memory.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 3. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home
307 W. Wellington St.
Carthage, TX 75633
<http://www.hawthornfuneralhome.com>

Funeral Service

APR 3. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Hawthorn Funeral Home
307 W. Wellington St.
Carthage, TX 75633
<http://www.hawthornfuneralhome.com>

Remembrance Gathering

APR 22. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Koko's Cafe Uptown
6100 N. 10th St. Suite A
McAllen, TX 78504

Tribute Wall

TI

“Great man and was always happy to see him and Mr. Ralph Boles (sp). Reminds me of my wonderful parents Byron and Janie Cook and the amazing, beautiful childhood that was a result of such great people.

Tico - August 16, 2025 at 05:52 PM

RW

“Art and my dad, John Wilson, were best friends for many decades since they had worked together in the valley. I know they shared many good times together and I fondly remember visiting Art in McAllen a couple times a year as a kid.

Art was a very kind, with a soft spoken humor that is missed.

I have found at least one photo of them together, and would love to get in touch with any family members that might have some other photos or memories to share of them, as I know Art was a big part of dad's life for a very long time.



Robert Wilson - March 05, 2024 at 04:38 PM

HD

“ I was in the Lamar Jr Hi band in 1967 when Mr Ratley took over as director, and had him as assitant director all the way through McAllen High School. Art was kind and extremely talented. Sometimes he would break out his baritone and play popular music with some fellow trombones and me after school just for fun. I was amazed when I contacted him out of the blue several years ago, some 45 years after I graduated from McHi, and he remembered me and my fellow trombones. That was a teacher who really cared about his students. My condolences to the family, but what great memories you must have! Harold Davis, trombone, Sr '72

Harold Davis - January 18, 2024 at 02:08 AM



“ Artis (Art) Ratley

October 08, 2023 at 09:43 PM

AT

“ My great grandfather, a loving, kind , and joyful soul. Everytime I attended Christmas gatherings and thanksgiving gatherings he always shared his love for the band and his days when coal trains were still a thing. How he loved sharing his memories and how I loved listening to them, he had such a interesting life and the highlight of my journey with him in my life was always there supporting me throughout every high school concert and showing much interest in my extra curricular activities. I admired his compassion and will miss him dearly. I especially loved the last moments I had with him, knowing there is thousands of people in The Valley, a night I was working, he was sitting on the couch at 5 in the morning waiting for his breakfast. I was shocked to see him because it had been such a long time. Those few moments of resharing memories to spark the image of me in his past was truly a blessing. I love you papa and will be missed 🙏❤️



Anthony Tamayo - April 19, 2023 at 01:47 AM

AJ

“ Mr. Ratley was not only a band director, but a mentor to many. He was always willing to help and with such kindness. My family kept in touch with him over the years. I'm so glad we did because people and teachers like him are rare. We'll miss you Mr. Ratley.

Allicia Jimenez-Garcia - April 10, 2023 at 08:41 AM

“ As a child living on Tamarack in McAllen, we could hear the marching band practice on the field that is now the football stadium, from our home. During those years, during football games, the band was seated on the track and the directors' wives and children sat in front of the band, essentially on the very edge of the field. My sister and I learned ALL of the cheers and cheerleaders' names.

The directors and their families often gathered at the home of the head director for social time. I clearly remember Mr. Boles, Mr. Zook, Mr. Garner, and others being there with their families. I remember looking up to Jan Zook who attended band camp in Canyon, Texas every year and eventually became a drum major.

Our family attended football games, climbing the stairs high up in the stadium to watch halftime shows, including the flaming batons with the lights out. We attended concerts and parades; and learned the joy of singing songs at home and while traveling.

My sister and I have long benefitted from our father's love of music, an internal genesis of understanding with an outward expression. He loved teaching and helping students reach competitive levels at regional, all-Valley, and state levels. Even in the last months of his life, he would brag on former students who have become the best music teachers in the RGV. He was humble and never said he was responsible for their success. Instead, he attributed their successes to their hard work and dedication.

Our father will be missed at concerts, parades, and festivals; but his spirit is there nonetheless.

JW

“ Art was our dear friend since the early 1970s. We enjoyed many visits and trips with him. His keen observations, dry wit, and accepting nature made him a joy to be around. We send wishes for peace and comfort for his family.

John & Barbara Wilson

John Barbara Wilson - April 03, 2023 at 10:28 AM

CD

“ My condolences to Mr. Ratley’s family and friends. I had the privilege of having him as my Jr high and high school band director. One of my favorite memories was when my friend and I went to get fitted for our first high school band uniforms. We were both around the same size (short) and presented a bit of a predicament in a room full of uniforms for taller band kids. He sat on a chair and thought for a while. Just when my friend and I were about to excuse ourselves to come back another time, he stood up and pulled out two uniforms that fit us perfectly. I think they were brand new. He made our day! He will be sorely missed but has provided us with very happy memories. Thank you, Mr. Ratley!

Cecilia Pineda Diaz - April 02, 2023 at 05:54 PM

MO

“ Art was a wonderful teacher and I learned so much from him! He helped me learn how to teach individual musicians. Back in the 1960’s, the McHi band did picture shows for our community. When UIL marching contest was looming, all of the directors relied on art to remember what the students should do in the contest show! Nothing was charted on paper! Art just told students what to do and the other directors worked to polish the drill and music!

Mike Olson - April 01, 2023 at 10:45 PM

JS

“ *Mr. Radley was my Band instructor at the time of Mr. Safely at McHi. He was so kind and patient. Prayers to your family during this time of loss. He is not forgotten.*

Jennifer Seale - March 31, 2023 at 05:18 PM

RB

“ *Art was not only an outstanding musician, he had a great voice; which made him an integral part of the FUMC choir. A true gentleman! May the memory of Art Ratley be eternal.*

Robert Bonds - March 31, 2023 at 11:35 AM

TH

“ *He will be missed, especially his stories of the years of his involvement with all the bands and students he was associated with. He came to his Church FUMC until his last days, in which he was also a member of the Choir.*

Tom Hellums - March 31, 2023 at 10:02 AM