

MacKAY, Ronald Raymond - September 26, 1928, to April 14, 2008, of Cole Harbour, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his beloved children. He was predeceased by his wife, Francis as well as siblings, Macey MacKay, Isabel MacKay and Charles MacKay. Born in Dunneville, Ont., Ron was a son of the late Isabella (Dodd) and Charles MacKay. He is survived by his brother, Don (Yvonne) MacKay, and sister, Kathleen Henry.

Ron enjoyed the rigors of a large family and will be sadly missed by his children, Doug and Jane (Bolivar) MacKay, Ken and Catherine (Dilkie) MacKay, Donna MacKay and Brad Colpitts, Karen (MacKay) and Lloyd Homes, Jane (MacKay) and Kevin Cook; grandchildren, Margie MacMillan, Michael MacKay, Libby MacKay, Nelson Holmes, Jessie Holmes, Noah Cook, Sophie Cook; step-grandchildren, Carrie Colpitts and Colin Colpitts; great-grandchildren, Kai MacMillan and Jackson Colpitts. He also leaves behind his beloved little dog, Pepi II. Along with family, Ron enjoyed many close lifelong friendships.

Ron received his formal music education at the Canadian Armed Forces School of Music, St. Francis Xavier University, and Dalhousie University. Beginning music instruction at age 10, Ron joined the Royal Canadian Navy in 1946, serving for 20 years in the Armed Forces Band as a horn player, bandmaster, and instructor. His professional career as an instrumentalist (French horn) encompassed a variety of additional organizations, including the Halifax Opera Company, Halifax Symphonette, CBC Orchestra (Halifax), Halifax Symphony Orchestra and Victoria Symphony Orchestra. He retired from the Armed Forces Band in 1966 and began a career in music education as an instrumental music teacher in Truro.

As director of the Cobequid Educational Centre Symphonic Band and its feeder programs from grades 4 through 12, he developed one of the more prominent school bands in the Atlantic Provinces. During his tenure as Band Director in Truro, hundreds of students went on to pursue careers in music.

Since his retirement from teaching in Truro in 1991, MacKay had been very active as a clinician, adjudicator, conductor and composer throughout Canada and the Atlantic Provinces. He has adjudicated concert bands at the national and provincial levels in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. He taught and lectured at Nova Scotia Teachers College, St. Francis Xavier and Dalhousie Universities. He had held positions as conductor of the Saint Mary's University Concert Band, St. Francis Xavier University Wind Ensemble, and most recently conductor of the Halifax Concert Band and the Scotia Brass Ensemble.

He spent much of his time arranging and composing music for young bands, with dozens of published works for band - including many commissioned works. He received a number of honours and awards for his contributions to music, including life membership in the Canadian Band Association, Nova Scotia Music Educators Association, Nova Scotia Band Association, Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia, and was the 1997 recipient of the Canadian Band Association's National Band Award. He was an International Honorary Member of the Bandmasters Fraternity Phi Beta Mu. He was one of the founders of the Nova Scotia Youth Wind Ensemble, Nova Scotia Junior Wind Ensemble, and the Canadian Band Association's National Youth Band of Canada. He was past president of both the Nova Scotia Band Association and the Canadian Band Association. Ron never stopped working, and continued as a consultant for Buckley's Music in Halifax.

The loss of Ron MacKay, the father, musician, composer, band director, teacher and friend, will be felt by many; but they are also enriched by all that he shared and taught (and, hopefully somewhere he is watching the Toronto Maple Leafs win a Stanley Cup!).

A gathering of family and friends to celebrate Ron's life will be held in Cole Harbour Funeral Home, 1234 Cole Harbour Rd., on Friday, April 18. Visitation from 1-3 p.m. Memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. with a reception to follow.